

OCTOBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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in "The Queen of the Movies"
Photograph by Mallett studio, Chicago.



MADELINE TRAVERSE
in "Seven Keys to Baldpate"
Photograph by Moffett Studios, Chicago



MARY BOLAND
in "A Scrap of Paper"
Photograph by Mallet Studio, Chicago



JOBYNA HOWLAND
in "The Third Party"

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in "The Marriage Market"

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in Weber & Fields Company
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JOSEPHINE HERRIMAN

in "The Doll Girl"

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HELENA ROTHE
in Vaudeville
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

From
"APRIL'S LADY"
the second of the complete short stories by the author of "If I Were King"
See page 106.



"You admit this man is no relation, that he is nothing to you, that you met him by chance." Power listened with all his ears for the answer.

October
1914

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XXIII
No 6

RAY LONG, Editor

Announcement!

A New "David Harum" by
The Brother of the Man
Who Wrote The Original

EDWARD WESTCOTT died before his first book, "David Harum," came from the presses to win the American public as no book ever had before. Many writers tried to imitate that sharp yet kindly humor, but none succeeded. Magazine and book publishers decided that the knack died with Westcott. But it didn't. It ran in the family. Frank N. Westcott, living in that same quiet way in a small town in New York State, has written a novel that is every bit as good, if not better than "David Harum." It is full of those same kindly digs at folks and things, those same home-spun philosophies, and it is built around a character you'll love even more than you loved *David*, because you'll never be in doubt for a second as to where *Hepsey Burke* stands. That's the name of the book—

"HEPSEY BURKE"

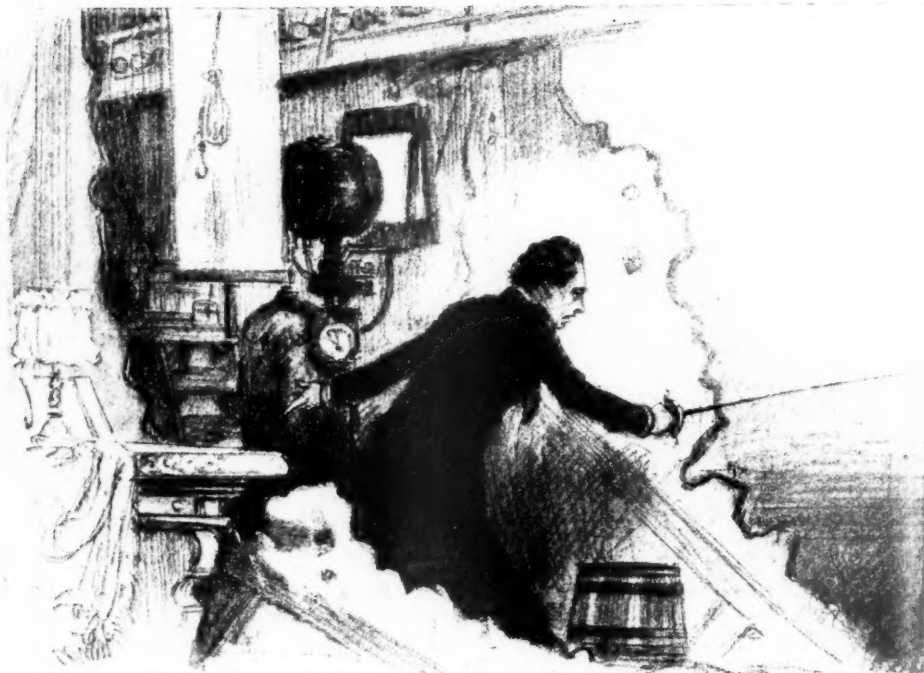
By Frank N. Westcott

Illustrated by

Frederick R. Gruger

It will see its first publication as a serial in THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, beginning in the next—the November—issue.

THE RED BOOK IS SETTING THE
PACE IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD



The Master of Arms

NOT since Booth Tarkington's "Monsieur Beaucaire" has an American produced a story so captivating as this. It is almost a short novel in form, but we present it complete in this issue.

"A LADY to see me, eh?" chirped Lawrence de Martillet. Having carefully brushed his overcoat, he hung that sadly aging garment on its nail behind the door. There he stood viewing it, with blind vacuity.

"She come twict," avowed Blinkie, the bake-shop boy from below.

"Twict!" echoed Larry.

"And she'll be back at six," declared Blinkie.

"Will she, now?" A lady to see him, twice. And she would be back at six. "High-tiddle-de-igh-tigh-heighty ho!"

bel-canto-ed the romance-loving Larry. A lady to see him, set on seeing him, determined to see him! What inviting possibilities! What promises of mystery! What reminders of more youthful and devil-may-care days!

"What was she like, Blinkie, that woman?" he repeated.

Blinkie turned back from the door, where he hearkened to the stentorian voice of Ludwig Krafft calling from below.

"She was wearin' a veil!" confided Blinkie. "But I seen her map!" Here Blinkie made a familiar sound of appre-



By Arthur Stringer

Author of "The Wiretappers," "The Counterfeiters," etc.

□□□ ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES □□□

ciation by detaching a clinging tongue from the roof of his mouth. "She wasn't as high-colored as Allie, but she sure was a peach!"

"Did she—er—seem excited?" casually inquired Larry.

"Naw! More like she wanted to keep the thing on the quiet!" was Blinkie's response. Something about the bake-shop boy's insinuating stare ruffled Larry's feelings. He drew himself up to his full five-feet-five and expanded his chest, for all the world like a pouter-pigeon.

"Damme, sir, do you s'pose I never had a lady call on me before!"

The bake-shop boy, enfiladed by that twin volley from above and below, achieved the better part of valor, and made for the stairs.

Larry looked after him. Then he looked about the room, as low-ceilinged as a ship's cabin. Then he looked at the nickel alarm-clock on the top of the cherry-wood book-shelves where his *fleur-de-lis* hung.

Then he approvingly viewed himself in the piece of looking-glass tacked to the cupboard, panel. Then he looked down at his second best suit, whose frayed edges had been twice braided by

the little tailor next to the bake-shop cellar—the same suit that he had once worn as *Count de Varville* in "Camille." He took the whisk-broom and with unctuous gentleness brushed its threadbare surface, knowing only too well the One-Horse-Shay calamity which would surely result from too much vigor applied to its over-tenuous surfaces. Then he reversed his cuffs, studied them, and put them as they were before. Still again he studied them, a little wistfully. Cuffs *would* soil so quickly, what with one thing and another. Taking it all in all, there was scarcely a week's wear in 'em!

LARRY, divorcing his attentions from his own person, gave a long and impersonal look about his room. His wistfulness increased. It was not the sort of room best suited to meet a lady in, a lady who wore a veil and could be described, in the euphuisms of horticulture, as a peach. Larry sniffed to see if the room smelt of tobacco. Then he crossed to the northerly wall and put his hand against it, mysteriously, for all the world as though he were taking the building's pulse. And puzzling as that movement may have been to the outsider, it was merely that Larry wanted to make sure that his heating apparatus was in its usual working order. For along that wall ran the great chimney from the bake-shop, a heaven-sent source of unfailing and inexpensive warmth, even less expensive than Mrs. Krafft's left-over pies at half-price, and the three-day-old rolls, five for a penny. So Larry, the luckiest man alive, could afford to carol as he swung about and began setting his room to rights.

This was a more obtruse operation than it sounds. For Larry had tricks of hiding things away,

a dozen and one expedients for disguising actual conditions. Lord bless my soul, when you eat and sleep and work in one room, as low-ceilinged as a ship's cabin, you've got to have tricks! Behind the mild-looking screen with the faded gold storks, for instance, lurked a water-tap and a sink and a gas-stove whereon very wonderful meals could be cooked—that is, cooked when things happened to be coming Larry's way. And cheek-by-jowl with these gold storks, on the inner side, hung clothes and towels and dish-cloths and Larry's sponge, as big as his own head. And from one end of an undulatory old Davenport—the humps fitted Larry to a T, so he welcomed rather than resented them!—protruded a tin bathtub. And the lower part of the cherry-wood bookshelves, the half so carefully curtained, was a china-closet and a jam-cupboard. And the plump brocaded divan, once you lifted its top, disclosed itself as a linen-press and clothes-closet combined, though of late, it is true, its subsidiary functions as a storage-place had not been overtaxed.

And Larry, as he labored in the midst of his diminutive *Lares* and *Penates*, fell to wondering just why this mysterious lady was so set on seeing him. It might

even be a part; and he gasped a little at the mere thought of it. It might be some Broadway actor laid up with "frozen pipes" and in dire need of an understudy. But Larry did not let himself become too sanguine over this. Life had taught him not to look for too much from that particular quarter, since he had long since learned that nothing could be quite so dead as a dead actor. And Lawrence de Martillet Doogan was dead; there was no doubt of that—as dead as the grandiose old melo-



Mrs. Krafft.

dramas in which, a generation ago, he had always charmed the ladies and always fought a duel and always emerged triumphant from his direst perils and his darkest misfortunes.

Larry had loved those old melodramas, and so had his audiences, and so had all the older, softer-hearted mid-Victorian world. But Larry could see now, that those beautiful and sugary stage-romances were not always scrupulously true to life. Yet the ladies, the dear, delightful, vanished ladies, the ladies whose ghosts still trooped back to Larry through the rose and gold of happy memory, once dropped tears from their lovely eyes over them, just as they once denominated Larry himself as "the Prince of Stage Lovers."

Those were in the days when Lawrence de Martillet Doogan lived in state, at the Parker House, when there were landaus and broughams waiting to whisk him off to suppers and footmen ready to hold his sable-lined greatcoat for him.

But this all slipped away from Larry, year by year, as youth slips away from a woman. Just how or when it went, he never quite knew. He became old-fashioned, just as horse-hair and crinolines and cruets did: out-of-date, old-timey, of another era, a relic of the good old days that could never return. And just two things remained of those good old days. One was Larry's great yellow scrapbook, at which our one-time Prince of Lovers warmed himself on cold winter nights very much as a man might warm himself before an open fire; and the other was Larry's fencing arm. He never forgot his fencing. And now that he had fallen on lean years, he eked out an existence as a *maitre d'armes*; he taught the use of the foil and saber to fat gentlemen who ate too much for their own good and loved to pound at poor, unfed, agile Larry as though he



As cautious as pall bearers trying to smother a joke.

were a carpet set up to be beaten!

Yet in Larry's valiant bosom still smoldered the spirit of romance. A lady to see him—a veiled lady, and on mysterious business! Once more he looked at the clock, to note how slowly the obtuse angle of five-forty became the acute angle of ten to. Then, as Larry shoved his felt slippers well in under the old Davenport, he thought of his mining stock, his hundred shares of Ruby Queen. Perhaps, after all these years, it had become valuable, as its promoter had solemnly assured the players of the Old Star Theatre it was bound to do. Perhaps it was worth a fortune! But Larry sorrowfully shook his head. It was too much to expect. A city, a slab-boarded, many-streeted, ugly city now stood where the Ruby Queen and her court of smelters should have reigned.

Larry suddenly stopped. Perhaps it was his Revolving Stage; perhaps at last some stupid ass of a fat-headed stage-manager had understood the Great Idea, had foreseen the greater fortune, hidden away in that Revolving Stage. Or—God bless my soul, could it, could it by any manner of means be old Mac Gregor, who had borrowed that nine hundred dollars from him back in eighty-one—or at least a contrite daughter making amends for the short memory and the shorter purse of an uncontrite parent?

But this, also, was too good to be true. The world was no longer built that way. That was too much like the old dramas, the foolish old dramas in which the end was always a happy one.

THINKING of those dramas made Larry think of the supper-scene in "Camille," and he somewhat wistfully remembered that another meal-hour could not be far off. When he looked up, to consult the clock, he discovered that daylight had sped away. The room was

quite dark. So he struck a match, turned on the gas, and lighted it.

It must have been at the same moment he lighted the gas that his door was opened. He did not hear it. He was not aware of anyone's entering the room. He thought he was alone, until he heard that quick, low-throated cry behind him.

"Pop!"

To the outsider it would have sounded an enigmatic, a foolish and inconsequential cry. But to Larry there was only one person in the world who could say "Pop" that way. And no other name carried with it more memories, more thoughts of happier and younger days.

"Pop!"

LARRY wheeled about and stared at the woman in the furs and the dark veil still starred with melting snow-flakes. Through this veil he could not distinctly see the white face. But he had no need to. The moment he heard that cry, that name so full of memories, he knew that it was Spider, *his* Spider, the Spider he had nursed and dandled as a child, the Spider he had once daily repeated the opening paragraph of "Rasselas" to, that some day she might learn the resonance of her own tongue and be the better for it when she grew up to be a great actress, even as her foster-father had become a great actor. And it was indeed Spider, Spider all muffled up so that he could scarcely have known her figure, Spider a little unsteady on her feet, swaying as she half held out her hands to Larry, imploringly, as though she were expecting—or at least, fearing—a rebuff from him.

"Spider!" cried Larry, with his old eyes popping and his nose a bit redder than before. "*Spider!*"

There seemed nothing ludicrous, nothing unlovely, about that foolish old name, recalling adolescent days when she appeared all legs and arms. And his own arms went out, as he saw her swaying there. She took a step or two forward and wilted down on his gray tweed coat-front, clinging to him hungrily, forlornly, brokenly. And as she hung there, her whole body began to heave and shake, and Larry could feel the hot tears on his neck, even through the veil.

"Bless my soul, my dear, but you mustn't cry this way! Zounds, madam, you *mustn't!*" And he tried to raise her face and look at her again, to make sure it was Spider, his own Spider, come back.

"Oh, Pop!" wailed Spider, with her face still hidden.

"Now, my dear, what is it? What's happened?" wheedled Larry. He reached up and tried to draw out Spider's hatpins. But a moment of deep study impressed him with the suspicion they were skewered through her brain, and he gave up the attempt as over-perilous.

"Oh, I can't tell you, Pop," was Spider's sobbing answer.

"No-o-o-ow, my dear?" coaxed Larry, leading her measuredly to the plump divan and kneeling beside her as though he were a stage hero and she his lady-love. Spider, white-faced, was mopping her eyes with a little cobweb of a handkerchief.

"Zounds, madam, you're ill!" cried Larry, staring into her face. And he patted her hand (as only Larry could pat hands) and felt her feet to make sure they were dry, and wondered what could have wrought such a change in his Spider, his Spider, who had once been so full of life and spirits.

"Yes, I'm ill, Pop! And I want you to take me in!"

And that was how Larry came to give over his little ship-cabin of a room to Spider, and sent for Mrs. Krafft, the baker's wife, and slept o' nights on a row of neatly laid out bags in the flour-room at the back of the bake-shop, where he'd forever hear the mixing-machine at work when he should have been sleeping.

II

IT was one fine morning when a fall of snow had made the City streets like cake-batter that Larry climbed the steep little stairs to the ship's cabin, and poking in a pert old head, blithely inquired how the Spider was making out.

Spider did not answer, but something about her face so frightened the bewildered Larry that he went scrambling and clattering down the stairs for Mrs. Krafft.



Larry had just put himself to rights and restored his foil to its green baize case when the patter of feet sounded on the bare floor of the music room. He looked up to see himself somewhat enigmatically studied by the young lady with the melancholy eyes.

And that rotund lady, scenting affairs of vast moment from Larry's incoherencies, climbed Larry's stairs without hesitation and almost without breath. And there her practised eye informed her of things quite alien to Larry and his narrow experiences, and she startled that worthy by promptly thrusting him back out of his own door, and locking that door in his face. Whereat Larry, in a daze, sat himself down on the stairs, wondering as to the meaning of it all.

It seemed no nearer a solution when Mrs. Krafft, abstracted and stern-browed, thrust a head out of the partly opened door and bade Larry run for a doctor as fast as his legs could carry him.

That altogether inflammatory message sent Larry scurrying to the street, without hat or overcoat, and with his hair flying. And when he had careened through the snow and burst into Dr. Hemstetter's office and learned the Doctor was out, as doctors quite often are, a sort of madness seemed to possess him. He remembered that he was losing time, that his Spider was surely in danger, that he was failing in his mission. He was also possessed of a vague memory as to the purposes of hospitals and ambulances, and in the light of that inspiration made his way panting to a telephone pay-station, where he called up Police Headquarters.

By this time Larry was flustered and out of breath. He did his best to make things plain to the Sergeant at the far end of the wire. The one thing the Sergeant insisted on getting right was the name and address. Larry had to repeat the street number three times. And the Sergeant, apparently comprehending the course of Larry's inarticulacies, calmly notified Fire Headquarters, and a still alarm was sent in to the Engine House in West Bleecker Street. And at the same time the 10th Precinct Station on MacDougall Street was casually notified, and before Larry had so much as gained his own door the engine thrashed up and a detachment of blue-coated policemen came panting after it, and in their wake again came a goodly portion of that section of New York which for a century has been watched over by the old spire of St. John's.

Then came a rattling fire-truck and a hose-cart, while windows went up and the crowd increased and the firemen who faced Larry, hatless, wild-haired and protesting, in his own doorway, accepted him as a householder in the last throes of fire-mania and gently but forcibly thrust him to one side and began running their line up the narrow stairway.

It was at the top step that these helmeted heroes were confronted by the stern visaged and somewhat astounded Mrs. Krafft. It was with an indifferent eye that she looked at the hose line.

"Keep as quiet as you can," she cautioned. And when the leader demanded to know where the fire was, a great light broke on her. Her motherly, plump hand caught him by the sleeve and she whispered something in his ear. And he, in turn, whispered in the ear of the man behind him. And they all turned and tiptoed down the narrow wooden stairs, with set mouths, as cautious as pallbearers trying to smother a joke.

At the street door they met three of the policemen, and the whisper was passed on to them, just as a doctor with a business-like bag elbowed them aside and went up the steps two at a time. And the hose-reel man was still holding the dancing and gesticulating Larry and still proclaiming his personal conviction the old Tartar ought to be sent to the psychopathic ward for observation, when one of the blue-coats rescued Larry and took him into the bake-shop and soothed him and got him a cup of hot coffee.

"'Tis as fine a boy as you ever clapped eyes on!" he announced. "'Tis that! And the Doctor himself says the same!"

And that was why Larry was kept busy that night, running messages for the imperious Mrs. Krafft, absently, like a man in a dream, explaining how the gas-stove was to be turned on and off and where things were to be found behind the gold-storked screen, and how Miss Biddle, the promptly-acquired Mission-nurse who found her vocation fittingly announced by the gold figures on Larry's screen, might sleep on the divan as snug as a bug in a rug.

But sleep, that night, was both fitful and disquieting to the troubled old

Larry, for his heart was with Spider. And the more he thought it all over, the heavier that once blithe old heart became, and the more he turned and twisted, until he looked startlingly like a big French loaf all ready for the oven. And from time to time, when he sighed lugubriously, he would sneeze with the meal-dust. And once he said aloud, "My poor Spider! My poor little Spider!"

III

THE bake-shop was astir early the next morning. So too were the Kraffts, as was their wont, for buying and selling and the eating of breakfast-rolls must go on, whatever else may be happening in the world. So too was Larry. And Larry, having dressed by lamplight and having with the help of Blinky brushed an amazing quantity of flour off his clothing and breakfasted on coffee and wheat-cakes, still found his sky a clouded one.

Just what it was, this vague trouble, Larry did not dare admit. He knew it was not the omitted three links of country sausage which customarily, of a cold morning, he cooked to a turn on his gas-stove.

Yet he knew that a cloud was resting over the neighborhood. He had felt it, even when the worthy Mrs. Krafft had reported that both Spider and the baby had had a fine night of it. But about the face of the baker's wife had been something preoccupied and furtive. She had not looked Larry straight in the eye. There seemed something unwontedly severe and repressed about her, a tight-lipped sternness which Larry, in his uncertainty, felt all too keenly.

Nothing was said, mark you. Nothing was breathed, not a word, not a whisper. Yet the cloud was there, as clammy and chilling as a Scotch mist. It penetrated to the soul of poor old Larry, and made his face, usually so blithe and valiant, look a bit pinched and gray.

He was solemnly buttoning his fencing-foils up in their casing, a casing of green baize that looked for all the world like a golf bag with *phthisis*, when Mrs. Krafft stepped into the room.

Larry pretended to be busy with his buttons; he had not the heart to look at her. Nor did the sight of his foils, his beloved foils, on this occasion touch him

with joy. He merely remembered that he had a fencing lesson with fat old banker Van Slyke up on Seventy-second Street, that dominating old financier who would roll out

of bed at half-past seven and dance around Larry for an hour as a penance for having eaten too much the night before. It was hum-drum work, that of fencing with fat old men.

And Larry, bent over his foils, did not deign or dare to look up until a half-smothered and quite unexpected sound smote his ears. That sound, in fact, was suspiciously like a sob.

He wheeled about to see the palpitating Mrs. Krafft facing him. Her eyes were wet. Her kindly countenance was drawn and puckered up like a winter apple. Yet there was a mysterious glow about her, a transforming and softening aura that brought Larry's heart up in his throat and then sent it down into his boots again.

"My God, madam," cried Larry, "she's not dead? Spider's not dead?"

"No; no!" sobbed Mrs. Krafft, rock-



Larry faced his new enemies.

ing and swaying in the luxury of a very tidal-wave of tears.

"It's the baby?"

"No; no!" cried the worthy woman. And by this time she had found Larry's shoulder and had her arm about his neck, hanging on grimly, contentedly, while the recipient of these dubious advances looked cautiously about to make sure that Ludwig Krafft himself was not within sight.

"Zounds, madam, what *is* it?" implored the perturbed Larry, unable to wriggle away, unable to guess at the mystery.

"The dear! The darling! The poor lamb!" continued the tearful lady on Larry's shoulder.

"What is it, madam?" demanded Larry as the paroxysms ceased a little.

"It's this," said Mrs. Krafft, wiping her eyes with one hand, and with the other waving an oblong of crumpled paper.

"I found it pinned to the inside of her—of her waist," said Mrs. Krafft. "I found it this morning, thinking I'd fold up the poor dear's things for her. Fastened there with a safety-pin. And her never saying a word about it, never a word."

THESE cryptic utterances were too much for the distraught Larry. He no longer listened to her. He turned and regarded the oblong paper with which Mrs. Krafft still seemed to be fanning an invisible sufferer. He snatched it, like a terrier snatching a chicken-bone. Then he held it up and blinked at it. Then he blinked at Mrs. Krafft.

"Why, it's—it's a marriage certificate," said Larry.

"And her saying nothing about it, all this time," repeated Mrs. Krafft.

"Why, she's married! Spider's married!" cried Larry.

"Of course she's married!" responded the antiphonal baker's wife.

Larry looked at the paper for a second time, the miraculous little scrap of paper that had worked such a change, that had sent such Scotch mists of despondency scurrying away. Then he wriggled loose from the embrace of Mrs. Krafft. He danced; he laughed; he shouted. Spider

was married! He caught Mrs. Krafft by her plump shoulders and squeezed her. He caroled again; he cut capers; he read the paper aloud. Then he swung about and planted a resounding kiss on Mrs. Krafft's rosy cheek.

Still again he stopped and looked at the precious document, reading aloud the names "Jules Goodall" and "Edwina de Martillet;" and as he read them his thoughts went back to the momentous day when Spider had decided on her stage name, when she had taken "Edwina" for her own sake, and the "De Martillet" for Larry's, protesting that at least a piece of his name was going to live behind the footlights. And he was still brooding over that happy memory when the asthmatic clock in the bake-shop struck eight, and he recalled the fact that he was late for his fencing lesson. He could picture Abner Van Slyke's impatience, his puffing indignation; for bankers with long purses could have very short tempers.

But who cared for fat bankers with fat butlers and fat horses? Who cared for a farce of a foil-lesson and a few paltry dollars? Spider was married! And Larry, that morning, could have fenced with the Flatiron Building or the Subway Express that took him hurtling up to Seventy-second Street, or run through the first sour-visaged blackguard who said life wasn't a fine and glorious thing, that muddy, glorious morning!

For the first time in his life, indeed, Larry failed to experience a keen desire to poignard Spruggins, the fat and sleepy-eyed butler. Yet it was this same Spruggins who had once dared to suggest that Lawrence de Martillet Doogan should apply for admission to the servant's entrance, at the entrance where the ash-cans were passed out and vegetables were passed in! Ha, the fiery-headed and glib-tongued little *maitre d'armes* had soon put that pompous factotum in his place. The insult had never been repeated; but the old antagonism had never died down.

In the music-room, cleared of its rugs and chairs, Larry found Abner Van Slyke pacing back and forth and awaiting him, looking uncommonly like a submarine monster in his wired mask and

high-collared canvas jacket and side-pads and scallop-gauntleted gloves.

"You're late, sir!" ejaculated Van Slyke, darkly. He was rather a bully; he had succeeded and grown wealthy by dominating others.

"A trifle late, I acknowledge," smiled Larry, as he began to peel off and fling his discarded garments at the sleepy-eyed Spruggins, who avenged himself by the patent reluctance with which he gingerly picked those garments up.

WITH his supple old body encased in its worn leather jacket, his blithe old face shadowed by its engaging and embattling mask, Lawrence De Martillet Doogan, "the finest fencer in America," faced his waiting pupil. He tested his foil—he always carried his own—by whipping it with a singing stroke about him, holding the "grip" lightly between the nervous pressure of thumb and fingers, snapping the resilient blade above his head with an airy jerk of the wrist. He smiled a little, behind his mask, as he saw the faded lines he had once chalked on Van Slyke's jacket, the "lines of engagement" which he could never quite get through the banker's head, just as he could never quite impress on him that a foil was not to be held in the fashion of a ball bat.

Larry promptly came "on guard," somewhat wistfully conscious of the fact that his opponent was more desirous of a profuse *diaphoresis* than an initiation into the most beautiful of manual accomplishments.

"On guard, m'sieur!" With head up and shoulders well back, Larry first went through the motion of drawing a sword. He held the foil lightly, with fingernails up, the point turned toward the floor, his elbow in line with the hip. Erect he stood, with his heels close together, the right foot pointing straight forward, the left pointing to one side, the left arm close to the side, with the palm out. Then he raised the foil, pointing upward and to the front, up to the full extent of the arm; then, using only wrist and fingers, dropping the point of the foil, he brought it in a circular sweep round towards the body, until the hand was on a line with the left hip and the

steel was directed straight at his always somewhat intimidated pupil.

As this was being done the left arm lifted until it was on a line with his own shoulder, and the relaxed fingers dropped unrestrainedly, balancing there, like the tail of an alighting bird, as the knees were bent and the right foot advanced twice its own length.

And this was what, for five weary months, Larry had been trying to teach Abner Van Slyke to do, what Abner Van Slyke had never learned to do, and never would learn.

ALL of Larry's muscles, for some reason, seemed made of elastic that morning. His heels seemed to be on springs. "*Touché!*" caroled Larry. "*En garde encore, m'sieur!*" Larry's parries and thrusts were like chain lightning. And the puffing banker, irritated as he was by those perpetual, those theatrical double heel-stamps, soon had the inward satisfaction of beholding an outward bedewing of moisture on his over-fed and over-driven body.

"Easy, there!" he gasped. "Easy, there, or you'll have me clean through the wall!"

As they began another bout, more leisurely, the banker engaged Larry in conversation.

"By the way—you've been an actor—haven't you?" he asked, between efforts, and breathing heavily from the exercise.

Larry, under his mask, could afford to smile. He, the *ci-devant* Prince of Stage Lovers, the quondam right-hand-man of Edwin Booth himself, had he once been an actor!

"Once," admitted Larry, toying about his heavier adversary as a porpoise toys about a liner.

"Well, there's a matter—I want to talk over with you—when we have the chance," came in gasps from Larry's swashbuckling opponent.

"Good heavens," said the old actor to himself, "the man has heard about the Revolving Stage! He is a man of business, a man of fortune—he could show 'em all that there were millions in it!"

"There's some Broadway ninny—some ninny of a play-actor—getting mixed up with my girl—my daughter, you know.

I've got to get at some way of stopping it—stopping everything."

"With your daughter?" queried the demi-semi-interested Larry. He remembered having caught rare and fleeting glimpses of a melancholy-eyed young lady drifting about the banker's house, a restless, prowling, tigery young lady with very lean cheeks and very willful red lips, a slender, arrogant, well-poised, well-gowned young lady who went riding with two grooms in the Park of a morning and drifted about in a landaulet buried in furs and had probably never been really hungry or really self-embarrassed in all her life.

"Keep on!" warned Van Slyke, as Larry tended to come to a contemplative stop. "She's out there now—she's got an eye on us. She's a sly young minx, sir—been watching me all morning—for some reason or other—an idle, willful minx, sir!"

"She's got beyond me, that girl—nothing to do—too many novels—long on romance—short on horse-sense—but I'll stop this actor nonsense—if it costs me ten thousand!" And the irate Van Slyke seemed to find a vague satisfaction in flailing and jabbing at Larry. But when gently but firmly brought back to "form," he went on again. "I want your advice—you're outsider, you know—and you understand these circus-people—these mountebanks—these actors."

It was then that the statu-esque Spruggins ambulated into the room and stood at attention.

"Your bath is ready, sir," sedately announced that factotum. And Spruggins having relieved him of foil and gloves

and side-pads and jacket, he went shambling and puffing up to his bath, leaving the cool-handed and dry-browed Larry to stare somewhat abstractedly after him.

LARRY had just put himself to rights and restored his foil to its green baize case when the patter of feet sounded on the bare floor of the music room. He looked up to see himself somewhat enigmatically



Spider, with a gurgle of happy pride, carefully turned down the shoulder Larry beheld it. And it was so bald and lessness that for the life of him Larry could only

studied by the young lady with the melancholy eyes.

"You don't know me, of course," she began. "But I know you, quite well. I've watched you so often! I love to watch you. You do it so lightly, so beautifully, so romantically."

"You honor me, madam," replied the stately Larry, bringing his heels together in one of his jack-knife bows.

"I was wondering," went on the sad-eyed young woman, a little dreamily, "if you couldn't take time to have coffee with me?"

"That would be a pleasure, madam, a pleasure," responded the courtly Larry;—and a goodly portion of his earnestness arose out of the fact that an hour's hard work had left him as hungry as a bear, seeing that the inner man had been fortified with nothing more substantial than two wheat-cakes.



coverlet, and put her arm out like a wing, and in the sheltering curve of her tiny and slant-eyed and such a beef-stenky-looking mass of wrinkled help-hold his breath and struggle as best he could to hide his horror.

"It takes Father over an hour to dress—he fusses so," explained Larry's guide. "And there are some things I *do* want to ask you about."

She had already led him below-stairs, where he had occasion to enjoy the expression of inarticulate exasperation on the usually stoical face of Spruggins. He saw nothing exceptional in the fact that the table had already been prepared for two. His attention, indeed, was directed toward an iced grape-fruit over which maraschino had undoubtedly been poured, and a *compotier* piled up with hot-house grapes, and a small silver pot emitting an ingratiating, a captivating, odor of fresh-cooked coffee, to say nothing of a laden toast-rack and what looked seductively like jellied quinces.

As Larry sat down before that oblong of white linen, it must be confessed, there were a few moments when he did not think of poor Spider. There were a few moments, in fact, when he listened with only half an ear to the ramblings of the young woman opposite him. His thoughts, for the time being, were purely ventral thoughts.

It was a sudden question from the melancholy-eyed young lady on the other side of the coffee-pot that brought him up short.

"And you were an actor once, were you not?" she had asked.

"A bit of a barn-stormer," loosely acknowledged Larry, as he sampled the jellied quinces.

"Then you know actors? You understand their ways, their lives?" was the next question.

"Egad, madam, actors are human, the same as you and I," tartly protested the quandom Prince of Stage Lovers.

"That's what I've always felt," concurred the placative Miss Van Slyke. "But Aunt Theresa says

they're different. She insists they're not the same as other people. That's why they all oppose me so about Jules."

"Jules?" questioned Larry, with a piece of toast capped with quince jam arrested half way between his plate and his expectant palate.

"Jules Goodall, of the Standard Company, the star in that new play called 'The Rose and The Princess.'"

"Jules Goodall!" ejaculated Larry. He remembered, wide-eyed, that this was the very name that he had read on Mrs. Krafft's paper that morning. The name was there, side by side with Spider's. And it meant that he was Spider's Jules—it meant that they were man and wife as plain as the nose on your face!

"Madam, what about this Jules Goodall?" demanded a suddenly investigative Larry.

"He's the man *I'm going to marry*," confessed the rapt-eyed young woman.

"You—you are going to marry this man?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered. "That's why I wanted you to help me."

Larry sat for a moment in deep and silent thought. It was almost too much for his poor old brain. He decided to lie low, until some light should come to him.

"*Me* help you?" he temporized, trying to get his wits together.

"Yes," was her calm-voiced answer. And again she sat silent for a moment or two. "I'm so alone in this. I have really no one to go to—no one but you. That's why I'm counting on your advice!"

"And I can give you some advice, madam, some very good advice," announced Larry, with a decisiveness which was quite lost on his brooding-eyed companion.

"We may have to go away together," she calmly confessed.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish, indeed. Go away together—a pretty kettle of fish!

"May you, now?" cried the incredulous old actor.

"If the need arise, he will; I know he will," ruminated the soft-eyed woman.

Larry sat back and stared at her.

"And he a star?" he demanded.

"Love will always come first!"

"And throw up a Broadway engagement?" was the scoffing query. Nothing in all the universe, to the eyes of that old actor, could come before a Broadway engagement.

"Love should be willing to sacrifice *everything*," was the proud response.

LARRY was unable to catch his breath for a moment or two. Then he chanced to remember that the young lady's only parent was reckoned to be worth several millions. That, of course, might account for it. The unworthy, the adroit, the circuitous Jules Goodall knew on which side his bread was buttered.

"He's so good, so brave, so manly!" the rapt-eyed woman was saying. "I thrill all over, every time I see him face *Count Marco* and fight his way into the chamber of the *Princess*, with that one red rose!"

"Ha!" snorted Larry aloud. Stage-heroes! Balderdash! And the worst fencing ever perpetrated on a dull-eyed and unsuspecting public, he'd wager his soul! So good! So brave!—the base deceiver of innocent women, the invertebrate Lothario! And even the quince jam no longer appealed to Larry.

"And when he says good-by to her, although his heart is breaking, although he loves her better than anything else in the world, when he leaves that one red rose in her hand, as she stands there alone in the moonlight, looking after him—it, it brings the tears to my eyes, even to think of it!"

"I see," said the non-committal Larry. "And you want to make sure that he is brave? That he is good? That he is noble and truthful?"

"Oh, I know he is," protested the dreamy-eyed Georgina Van Slyke. "It's only that they are all against him. They don't understand!"

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The Woman From Three Above

By Bertha Knatvold Mellett

THIS is the first story of a new writer—another Red Book "discovery." Her work has the rugged power that compelled attention for those early stories Rex Beach brought out of Alaska, the power which makes you feel the story.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK B. HOFFMAN

HITCHY SMITH bent forward over the gray canvas telescope that served him for a table, and shuffled the deck for the twentieth time that day. Hunched in the lower berth of an incommensurable cabin of the *Charles D. Lane*, his rough-hewn head and shoulders were thrust painfully forward by the resting-place of his traveling companion above, and his crippled legs angled away from the berth like tortured calipers. Now and then he spat wearily upon his hands and reached mighty, aching arms outward and upward for relief.

A woman, her silk skirts rasping in the wind, stopped at his cabin door and, bracing herself with her back to the gale, looked in. The old man went on with his solitaire, but the color of his face changed, and under his grizzled beard his mouth drew into a quivering line. The woman watched while the cards were run through twice. She showed no interest in the game, but strong as her body stood, she seemed to welcome the steadying pause.

"Well, what are you going to do?" Her thick contralto broke through the hiss of spray and wind.

The old man did not lift his eyes, and his fingers moved to the measure of the game. But two aces came to the top and were buried unnoticed.

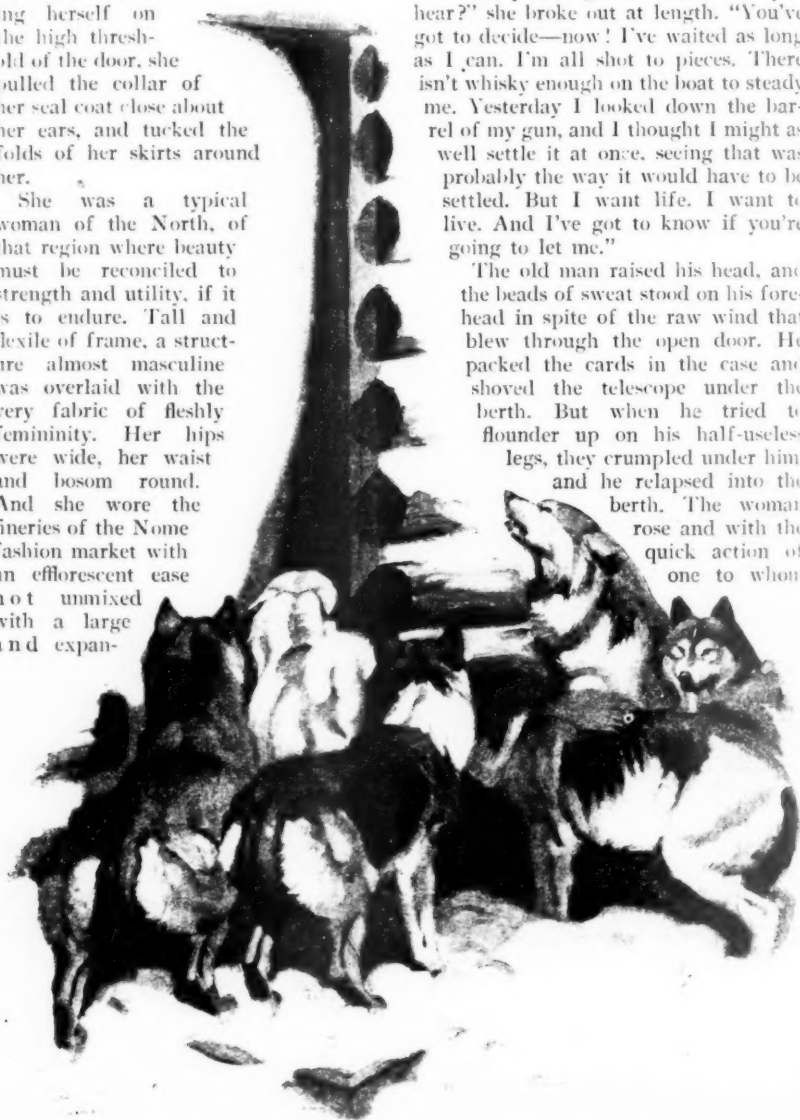
The woman turned away. Then, as though re-grasping a slipping purpose, came back. Seating herself on the high threshold of the door, she pulled the collar of her seal coat close about her ears, and tucked the folds of her skirts around her.

She was a typical woman of the North, of that region where beauty must be reconciled to strength and utility, if it is to endure. Tall and flexible of frame, a structure almost masculine was overlaid with the very fabric of fleshly femininity. Her hips were wide, her waist and bosom round. And she wore the fineries of the Nome fashion market with an efflorescent ease not unmixed with a large and expan-

sive vanity. As she sat in the doorway her fingers moved up and down the strands of a nugget chain that encircled her neck and dropped to her waist. Except for the movement of her hands, she sat as motionless as a crouching cat.

"Well, you've got to decide—do you hear?" she broke out at length. "You've got to decide—now! I've waited as long as I can. I'm all shot to pieces. There isn't whisky enough on the boat to steady me. Yesterday I looked down the barrel of my gun, and I thought I might as well settle it at once, seeing that was probably the way it would have to be settled. But I want life. I want to live. And I've got to know if you're going to let me."

The old man raised his head, and the beads of sweat stood on his forehead in spite of the raw wind that blew through the open door. He packed the cards in the case and shoved the telescope under the berth. But when he tried to flounder up on his half-useless legs, they crumpled under him, and he relapsed into the berth. The woman rose and with the quick action of one to whom



"I woke up one day when the malmutes were whining at the door."

service has become a habit, reached down and by sheer strength of joint and muscle lifted him to his feet. They stood facing each other, the woman braced against the door, the old man with one arm flung along the length of the upper berth.

"Well—what are you going to do?" she panted. "I've got to know."

Hitchy cleared his throat, but his voice was husky when he spoke, and she leaned forward to catch his words.

"I dunno ma'am—I dunno. I aint the man to decide. I aint fit. I'm sick thinking of it. Sometimes I think it don't count so much." Her eyes were fixed so intently upon him that she seemed to be listening with them rather than her ears. "Sometimes it seems that the two of them wasn't worth the woman the law would want for them."

"But there was two of them, ma'am," he stumbled on, "—two men that wasn't much good, maybe, but still had a right to live. And maybe there'll be more, if it aint stopped. And I aint got a right to keep still, ma'am—I aint got a right."

"Then I've got to do it, have I?" she broke in, and the silken contralto of her voice was rent into sharp, thick staccatoes. "I've got to get back to my state-room and finish the job now, because you can't decide, and because my nerve wont hold out? Maybe I've got a chance—maybe you'd decide that way, if I could stay with it a little longer. But I can't hold out. I've lived on my nerve for two years, and now it's all gone. There's not another man on the boat that wouldn't decide my case one way or other, quick, so that I could know—and rest."

She was talking fast, and her hand had clutched the chain together at her throat. Hitchy leaned against the upper berth, and under her indictment his face twitched pitifully.

"If you'd decided, either way, I'd have kept still. But you haven't decided, and I can't hold out—I can't hold out, I tell you. Now you listen to me. There are men aboard this ship who have decided quick and sure all their lives. You've got to give me a chance with them. I'm going to have a hearing, and I'm going to have it now. And I'm not going to have any outside jury sitting on my case,

either. I'm going to have a jury of my peers. You pick two men and I'll pick two. And I'll tell my story and you tell yours. And if they say they'll give another try, we'll all keep still. And if they say it's a case for the law—I'll do what's to be done—quick."

The old man's face was still, now, and under his shaggy brows his eyes, dim from old snow-blindness, closed as though in prayer.

"You mean," he said, speaking slowly, "—you mean you'll take this off me? You mean you'll stake your pile like that? God, ma'am!"

He turned and put his head on the sleeping place of the man who shared his room. The woman stepped across to him and laid her seal-clad arm across his shoulder.

A SOPPING blanket descended from the sky; night had fallen on the *Charles D. Lane*. Along the forward deck all was silence, the lights from the staterooms only serving to pick out with points of incandescence the desolation of a forsaken quarter.

From the social hall on the after-deck came sounds of revelry. The Russian Rose, making the annual down-trip for fineries that her profession necessitated, had been prevailed upon to sing. When her jeweled fingers, tired of technique, had at last throbbed off into the rhythm of familiar airs, there had floated out and mingled with her clear soprano the full-chested baritone of Council Bill.

Forward of the lights and music the wind beat with its saturated bludgeon on the shutters of Hitchy Smith's state-room. And the single incandescent vibrating in its socket at the head of the upper berth shone down on a silent company.

Hitchy sat hunched in his berth again. Duplicating his attitude and discomfort sat two other men. A fourth had drawn the telescope from under the berth and, propping it against the wall, was using it for a seat. Leaning across the plush bench in the corner, her back to the four men, stood the woman. She still wore her seal jacket. Her black pompadour had been smoothed, and under the light, vulgar as was the line into which it was

combed, her hair shone soft and fine like that of a girl.

A door down the port side of the ship banged, and steps sounded on the deck. "He's coming," the woman said, without turning her head. When the steps were opposite the door, she unlocked the shutter, and a young man came in. He surveyed the room with a glance, spoke to the woman, calling her Molly, and swung himself into the upper berth.

"You certainly are cheerful," he said, stretching himself comfortably. "I didn't anticipate such a mournful gathering." There was the wheedling warmth of the South in his voice. "You are aware, I reckon, that Council Bill's tuning up down to the social hall. But even that's less depressing than this here."

Hitchy knocked the ashes from his pipe into the cuspidor beside him. "It wasn't intended as a jollification, Landers," he said. "I told you you was sworn in on a jury when you said you'd come."

Landers laughed. "Aint he solemn, Molly?"

The woman looked up, and the pallor of her face silenced him.

"We're all solemn to-night," she said.

Dallan, sitting next to Hitchy, heaved his tortured shoulders forward and, opening the door, threw his cigar stump into the water. When he came back he did not seat himself, but stood in the angle of the wall.

"Who's going to start it?" he asked.

Hitchy locked his hands over the bowl of his pipe.

"If it suits the court," he began, "I'd like to say my say first. I've noticed the most human thing about juries is the way they remember what's said last. My story aint a pretty one, and if it's to be forgotten, I'd as soon you forgot it quick.

"It's dated back two years, when I was trying to get from Point Hope to Lopp's Mission behind a starving dog-team that petered out almost in sight of Teller, along about Discovery on Lindy Love Creek. That was the time my stumps froze. I hadn't felt the blood in them for three days; but I had life enough left to fight up creek where I could see smoke. I crawled towards it on my el-

bows. About halfway there I began to see pansy beds in the snow, and base-burners like we had back East, and girls in summer dresses—you know the pipe dreams freezing men have. The dogs at the place must have give the alarm, because I hadn't the strength to holler, and some one came out and carried me in where it was warm to thaw out. But I didn't know anything about that for a good spell after.

"Reckoning by the time I got to the station afterward, I laid there same as dead for a month. I came to one night in the middle of hell-let-loose. I couldn't move for the pain in my legs, but I could listen. There was scuffling—a steady, whispered scuffling like men in felt shoes was fighting with the whole shanty for a ring. A howl ran through the whole thing—a howl that rose and fell and chopped itself up into words awful to hear. Some one was breathing hard—sharp and steady—not wasting any wind in words. I couldn't turn my head, but the shadows turned and twisted and writhed up big and small on the wall. Finally they warped down close, and something heavy struck my bunk. The jolt sent needles of pain scouring through every vein in my body, and for a while I seen nor heard nothing but the buzzing of the blood in my head. When that eased up a little, I looked for the shadows again. They had dropped down close to the floor, and the noise had died to a weak whine.

"By and by it was still in the shanty, and I laid there wondering what murder had been done under my bunk. It was maybe an hour before there was a stir again. Then I see by the shadows that two people was lifting something. They carried their load down to the far end of the room where the light was burning. There was two of them, Edwards, a big Scotchman that Olsen of Three Above on Lindy Love had hired in Nome for his foreman, and Molly Olsen, the old man's wife.

"Muddled as I was from dreams and pain, still I savvied—and I turned sick and dropped out of the world again.

"When I come to, the shanty was tidied up and Molly Olsen was sitting at the table with her face in her hands.



She was so white and set I thought she'd froze. When I spoke, though, she got up and came over to me. Something else over in the corner shifted, and I see it was Edwards getting up from the floor behind the stove, where he'd been laying in his blankets. The bunk at the other end of the room was empty.

"I didn't ask about Olsen—but Edwards told me, hurrying at it like the scared murderer and liar he was. The old man had drunk himself to death, he said. They'd had a tussle with him all winter trying to keep the booze away from him. But he'd got it finally, and it had finished him. He'd chased a pink boa constrictor through the pearly gates about a week before, I gathered, and had had Christian burial down to the Mission. Molly Olsen had nothing to say, but after she'd give me some coffee and straightened my blankets, she went back to the table and froze again. In a few days Edwards hitched up the dogs and took me down to the reindeer station, and I never see hide nor hair of any of the outfit until just before the *Lane* sailed this time. Then I see Molly Olsen on the street. I asked around, but nobody knew anything about Edwards. Some

said work had shut down on Three Above, and some said Edwards had skipped with the clean-up the fall before.

"I'd always felt the weight of Olsen's murder on my conscience, and I figured when Edwards showed up I'd start something. So when I see Mrs. Olsen I shuffled up and asked her where Edwards was. The look she gave me was the sickest mixture of hate and fear and pleading ever I see in two eyes.

"'Edwards is dead,' she said. Even then I didn't catch on.

"'Dead!' I says.

"'How'd he die?'

"'D.T.'s,' she says and tries to brush past me.

"'Then I seen it. 'You got *him* too!'

I says. But she was gone, hurrying down the street. When she come to the entry to Davis' place she stopped and leaned up against the door like the strength was gone out of her body. I was plumb dazed. All this time I'd been hanging onto a fool faith that Molly Olsen wasn't party

"I crept over to the bunk where Hitchy was and huddled close—he was alive and as far as I knew had no harm for me in his heart."

to the killing on Three Above, that she couldn't help what went on. You know how a man'll hang onto his belief in women. But Edwards' being dead flabbergasted me. I wandered around for a while and went in to get a drink to help me straighten out the muddle in my mind. There wasn't no room for argument. The woman was guilty—guilty as any poor man-devil that ever swung for less. But she was a woman, and she'd leaned up against the door at Davis' place when her strength give out. And back of the hate and danger in her

eyes was the light that warmed us all when we was kids.

"While I was thinking, the spieler went by hollering 'Back to home and mother—Seattle and the outside.' I thinks to myself that she'll be going out on this boat. So I stumbles down to the navigation office. Sure enough, she'd made a reservation. There was one bunk left and I took it. She didn't see me until the last lighter'd gone ashore. When she did, she lit out for the pilot-house to parley with the captain. But the boat was under a full head of steam and the captain had no notion of turning back or putting out a boat. So she came at me. 'What'll you take,' she says, 'to go back and keep your mouth shut?'

"I told her keeping my mouth shut wasn't the way I expected to strike pay. Then she lit into me with a tongue that tore the hide off my family back to Adam. If she'd kept that up it'd been easy for me. But she softened. That's what got me—she aint all bad. I aint the attorney for the defense, but I want to tell you that woman's got good in her. She could have done for me, up there on 'Three Above, or let Edwards do for me, and I'd 'a' been past telling, these two years. To-day when I couldn't get to my feet, she lifted me up—she aint all bad. And God knows she aint all good. But how am I to judge her, being a good deal the same mixture myself?"

He stopped and, for the first time since beginning his narrative, raised his head. But the woman's eyes were not on him. They were raised to the bunk where Landers lay, his face drawn and gray under his clasped hands. She seemed to have forgotten the other men in the room. Even the conclusion of Hitchy's story seemed not to impress her, but like an automaton set going by a key, she took up the plea where he had left off.

"I'm not all bad, Landers—I'm not all bad. Don't look that way, dearie. Haven't we all looked on and seen things in the North—haven't we all done things that wouldn't go on the outside?"

The man in the bunk did not uncover his eyes.

"You heard him—you heard Hitchy say I'm not all bad."

He moaned and turned his face away.

"We were going out to his folks in Mississippi," she said turning to the other men, and her voice was suddenly the voice of an old woman telling a bitter tale. "I nursed him through typhoid this spring—we were going out to be married. I was fond of him. But there's no chance for me now. It's all over with me. Before Hitchy began I planned to make a fight. I had a story framed up that you'd have believed. But he wouldn't have believed it—and he's all I care about. I got so fond of him while he was sick—God! but he was sick. I sat up nine days and nine nights hand-running—nine days and nine nights. Did you ever sit up nine days and nine nights, never taking your clothes off and never shutting your eyes without shuddering lest somebody you loved would slip away while you weren't looking? Did you ever grope around, day after day, for the fear of God—and have that on your soul that froze the prayer on your lips? But all that don't count in this. All that counts is that I watched Edwards kill Olsen, drink by drink, all winter through, and the next winter I killed Edwards the same way."

The man in the berth writhed. Her eyes went up to him. Dallam, standing in the angle of the wall, reached up and turned out the light. When she began again her voice halted, as though she recalled with difficulty that which she had to tell.

"I watched Edwards kill him. When he got bad I helped to hold him. When he fought against the whisky, I helped get it down him. I wasn't afraid of him. I wasn't sorry for him. I'd cooked for him, and I'd biked with him from Valdez to Dawson and down to St. Michaels. We hit the trail when he wanted to, not when it was good traveling for a woman. I'd boiled his rotten dog-meat when it was fifty below and the cabin windows couldn't be opened. I'd washed his clothes and boarded his men. I'd even turned his windlass when my knuckles cracked to the bone in the wind. But I never kicked, because he was hard up, and because he said he'd marry me, and it would be share and share alike when he struck it.

"Then luck came his way. Lord—I've seen the dust shine through the black sand in the boxes when every riffle held a pocketful.

"But I kept on cooking for the crew—cooking and washing and putting up with his drunkenness. And he went back on what he said about marrying me and divvying the clean-up.

"One day he went down to Nome for a crew, and came back with—Edwards.

"I wouldn't have listened to Edwards if he'd said right out what he was after. But he never said anything. He never even made love to me like another man would. He went around hinting—hinting and hinting and feeding the bitterness against Olsen that was already rankling at the roots of my soul. He'd laugh when Olsen'd get drunk, and say it was too bad the old man was going to kill himself before he had a chance to spend his money. And when he'd say that, I'd have a picture before my eyes of the dust that was going down to Selby's in the fall, and of the hotels and things it would mean to me. Then I'd remember the cabin where I'd cooked the dog-meat, and the tent where I'd fed the day crew. And the difference between one picture and the other to me was just whether the old man drank himself to death, or whether he didn't.

"We cashed in about fifty thousand that summer. I found the drafts in Olsen's pocket afterwards. I didn't know how much it was then, but I knew it was a lot.

"The winter came black and cold, and so still it seemed like all creation had frozen stark. The crew left, but Edwards stayed—more and more silent all the time, saying less and hinting more. He'd sit all day at the table where the lamp was burning, watching Olsen, urging him to drink, and now and then shaking his head. Hitchy was there at the last. It was pretty bad, I guess. I don't remember. All I recollect was feeling there was a nasty job to be done. Once I know Edwards hit the old man over the head with a bottle and I struck at him. Another time he put his arm around me and I told him to wait.

"I woke up one day when the malamutes were whining at the door, and

when the lamp was out and the gray of a short day came sifting through the windows. The cabin was dirty—littered with bottles and cards, and the fire was down. Hitchy there lay stiff and unconscious in his bunk, and his blanket had been dragged across the floor to the door. Numb with a terror I couldn't understand, I picked it up and shook it, and covered him up. Then I turned around. There was something on the bed—something puffed and ugly that looked like the old man. It lay there grinning with loose jaws. It was Olsen. I was so afraid of him I shook. I waited for him to move—to ask for whisky—to swear at me. I waited so long my muscles cramped. Then I stooped and touched my finger to the cheek. The skin sagged like it was stretched over water—cold water. I yelled—and Edwards laughed. I turned and saw him sitting behind the stove. I knew when I saw him there that I hated him—that I had hated him for a long time—more than Olsen, more than the cold and the dark and the work and the want. He left the stool where he was huddled and came towards me. I didn't move. I stood still in front of the old man's bunk. He stopped halfway across the floor. 'What are you staring at?' he shouted. 'I'm looking at a murderer,' I said. 'Take a peek at yourself then,' he snarled. 'You'll hang for this,' I said. 'If I do, I'll hang with the best-looking woman in the North,' he answered back.

"The goose-flesh crinkled up my arms and met across my shoulders.

"'What are you going to do with that?' I pointed to the thing that had been Olsen.

"'The dogs are hungry,' he said, and laughed.

"I grabbed the old man's gun that was hanging in a holster on the wall.

"'Put that gun down,' he yelled.

"'I'm not going to put it down,' I said. 'I'm going to stand here with my finger on the trigger. And you're going to get into your parka and go down to the station for the Laps to help you bury him.' He swore at me. 'Hike,' I said, and I looked at him down the barrel of the gun.

"I was steady enough until he was

gone, watching him while he got into his furs. Then I followed him to the door and watched out through the pane while he hitched the dogs. Even after he had disappeared down the creek I stood at the window. I didn't lay down the gun. I was afraid he'd come back. I don't know which I was most afraid of—the living man outside or the dead man that lay there grinning at me. I crept over to the bunk where Hitchy was and huddled close—he was alive and as far as I knew had no harm for me in his heart. My teeth chattered, and the hand that held the gun got cold and numb.

"I crossed the room and poured out a drink in a tumbler—then the thought came to me. I put the glass down. I grew stronger. My knees stiffened, and the cold dampness in my hair dried. Pulling the table out where I could watch the door, I put the gun down on it, and began to clean up the shanty. I got the old man's good clothes, and got them onto him. After a long time Edwards and the Laps came, and they took the body away and buried it in the snow. When Edwards came into the cabin, after it was over, he poured himself a drink. He got the glass 'most to his mouth—then he looked over at me.

"'Have a drink,' he said.

"'I'm not drinking,' I answered.

"'Neither am I.'

"We looked at each other, and we both savvied.

"We lived under that one roof, one at each end of the cabin, each watching the other across the table with the bottles and the glasses. As soon as Hitchy could be moved, we got him down to the mission. It was safer to have him out of the way. Even when work opened up in the spring, Edwards stayed in the cabin. He was watching me.

"I didn't go back to the cook-tent. I had the drafts out of the old man's pockets. One day Edwards came in and said he was going down to Nome. I told him good-by and to look out for old man Smith—it was hard to tell what he had seen the winter before. Edwards was so nervous by this time he shook like he had ague, and his face was gray. It got grayer when I said that about Smith, and he said he guessed he'd only go as

far as Teller. He had to go some place—he had to get away. It had been a steady fight all winter, and he couldn't stand the strain. When he came back he was steadier—but he had been drinking. I knew I had won. It was a case of him or me. He'd never go away and leave Three Above while the dust was coming out the way it was that summer. Neither would I. I'd mushed the length of the river and worked my fingers to the bone for just what Three Above was turning out. As far as anybody knew—as far as Edwards knew—I was the old man's widow. And I was going to stick to my claim.

"About once a week after that, Edwards would go down to Teller, and when he'd come back he'd be unsteady. I had won, but I had to wait and keep still. Work shut down, and by November Edwards and I were alone on the creek. He knew he was beaten at the whisky game, but he was laying for me to get me another way.

"Once when I had my back turned something whizzed by and crashed against the wall. It was a plate he'd flung at my head. I turned, and saw him leaning against the timbers, white as death and breathing hard.

"'What are you doing?' I yelled.

"'I saw a rat,' he whispered. His teeth chattered.

"'You lie,' I yelled again, and we had it back and forth across the long black room with the lamp burning beside the bottles on the table.

"The next day it was a tea-cup—then a lump of coal, and once it was a knife. Why he didn't use a gun I don't know, except that he shook so he was afraid he'd miss and I'd fire back and drop him.

"Once I woke in the night and heard something creeping across the floor. I grabbed out quick, and my fingers sunk to the roots of his hair. He whimpered like a scared child and crept back across the room to his blankets behind the stove.

"One night I heard glasses clink. I opened my eyes. Edwards was at the table pouring out a drink for himself—by the light of sulphur matches. He took a swig that would have floored a horse. I waited until he had gone back to his



"He got the glass 'most to his mouth—then he looked over at me. 'Have a drink,' he said."

bunk. When he began to snore I got up and went over to him, carrying the bottle with me. I waited there until morning.

"When he opened his eyes I said, 'Have a drink.'

"Thanks," he said, and his tongue was thick and his eyes shot. And he took the drink—a big one too.

"That was the end. It didn't take as long to kill him as it did Olsen. Edwards was worn out with the strain, and he gave up easy. When he was gone, I tidied up the cabin, hitched the dogs and went down to the station for the Laps to bury him.

"Then the season opened up, and Three Above looked better than ever—but I couldn't work it. I was afraid of the shanty—afraid of the gold that seemed glued to the boxes with blood. If a paper rattled in the wind, I would scream. If a dog stirred in the night I would think it was Edwards crawling towards me and reaching out for my throat with his long, shaking fingers. I couldn't rest.

"The boy there came up with the crew from Nome. He looked good, and he was good. I wondered if the gold in Three Above would be any object to him. If something good could come into my life I was more than willing to pay for it—so much bad had come from my hard work.

"Then he got typhoid, and I nursed him. You know how it is with the woman that nurses a man. She seems like an angel from heaven to him—but that's all over now."

She stopped, and Dallam reached up

and turned on the light. She sat rigid on the red plush bench. The chain had parted during her story, and the broken strands, wrapped about her fingers, cut into the flesh. Landers' face was buried in the pillow, and the three other men gazed steadfastly at the floor. The voice of the Russian Rose came faintly sweet from the cabin, and the hissing of the prow as the boat cut through the water was like a weary sob.

"Somewheres," Dallam's voice broke the silence. "there's a verse about not judging lest we be judged. Seeing I can't recollect any better precedent, I'll vote that way. I, for one, am in favor of failing to notify the authorities when we land."

"That's me," echoed three voices almost in unison.

The woman did not smile. She took the hands extended to her, but she scarcely seemed to notice them; her eyes were on the man in the upper berth to whom she had addressed her story.

"And you, boy—you?" she whispered.

Landers raised his head, and his face was streaked with tears, like the face of a child in sorrow.

"That goes," he said.

Then he clambered down and reached for the knob of the door. Before going, he turned.

"I'll be taking the first train out of Seattle, for home—back in Mississippi. I want to see my folks. If I don't see you again—good-by."

The woman reached both hands toward him, but he passed out without seeing them.

Another story of Alaska by this new writer will be in an early issue of The Red Book Magazine.

A COMPLETE RÉSUMÉ OF THE OPENING INSTALLMENT OF

"EMPTY POCKETS"

A NEW NOVEL OF NEW YORK BY RUPERT HUGHES

"EMPTY POCKETS" is vastly more important than just a daring uncovering of life secrets. It is a great human story of the people and customs of this country that looms up with the work of Dickens or Hugo.

Like Mr. Hughes' "What Will People Say?" this is a novel of New York. It is as tremendous in scope as the wide range between that wonderful city's wealth and poverty, beauty and ugliness, goodness and baseness, wisdom and ignorance. And it is all so true that whatever part of it has chanced to come into your life will be exactly as you have known it or seen it.

"Empty Pockets" is built around the life of a gay, profligate millionaire, "Merry Perry" Merithew, and his effect on five young women: Aphra Shaler, the little pig who brought herself to the New York market; Maryla Sokalska, who was born shortly after her parents passed the Statue of Liberty in their flight from the poverty and oppression of Russian Poland; Red Ida, a pick-pocket; a girl from the Middle West, who ran away from her parents rather than go back with them; and Muriel Schuyler, the beautiful young aristocrat, whom twenty years of petting and luxury could not spoil.

"Merry Perry," whose modishly tailored empty pockets had always been sieves, left empty by their constant outpour of gold, loathed his East Side neighbors, the empty-pocketed poor. Whenever he was asked to visit the slums of New York, he always answered that it was the last place on earth where he would be found. It was. He was found there dead one morning on the roof of a tenement, grasping in one blood-stained hand eight fine strands of a woman's copper-colored hair, and with his elegant garments stained with his blood.

Immediately, the great city's newspapers set their packs of keen-scented reporters in a race with police and detectives to hunt down the woman whose tell-tale hair would expose her as the last companion of the dead *roué*, Hallard, a reporter who knew New York too well, and almost every chapter of Merry Perry's life-history backwards, struck first for Aphra Shaler, who had been the last, best known recipient of Merry Perry's princely support. He had only the copper-colored hair and a hat pin of peculiar design for clues. He found Aphra and her limousine ready for flight, her copper-colored locks of the day before bleached to ash and her hat pins covered by a veil. Before he could stop her, she was gone, flinging behind her the taunt, "Look up Muriel Schuyler. He liked her, and she has copper-colored wool." Hallard set the words down as the natural jealousy of the foul for the fair and turned to the possibility of Red Ida having lured Merry Perry to rob him.

But it was true that the "busy little humming bird," Merry Perry, had sought to know and had liked Muriel Schuyler, who

had begun going to parties just as he left off.

A year before Merry Perry was found dead, he was flying in his hydroaeroplane over a private yacht nearing New York City. Muriel and her father were on that yacht, coming into town for the day. Muriel asked about Merithew, and her father's sharp criticism of Perry aroused her curiosity.

While driving across the town, her automobile struck a crippled newsboy, and in an instant she was surrounded by a menacing crowd. That was the beginning of a day which introduced a care-free girl to the most fascinating and dangerous fop of her world and to a terrible understanding of what empty pockets mean to both the rich and the poor.



EMPTY

A NEW NOVEL OF NEW YORK

By Rupert Hughes

HERE we have the novel of New York which every American will want to read: a real story of the City by the biggest writer in the United States—the



Muriel Schuyler, the most lovable heroine in fiction.

CHAPTER VI

NEVER again in her life, perhaps, would young Muriel Schuyler be quite so amazed as she was then.

Without an enemy in the world, without knowledge of a soul that had ever hated her or tried to harm her; surrounded always with luxury and protection, just landed from her father's yacht, and motoring quietly to his town home, she found herself in one astounding moment surrounded by a mob of men and women accusing her of the murder of a crippled boy.

The boy had leapt straight out of nothing into the wheels. The mob had sprung up through the asphalt by an evil incantation. The anger, the bloodthirst, the roaring menace had come from nowhere. And from nowhere had come the rock that suddenly cut into her temple.

The blow dazed her hardly so much as the abrupt transformation of a street full of oblivious strangers, into a riot of enemies.

Her lips were parted in stupefaction, her eyes wide with cloudy wonder. A listless hand went automatically to her forehead, and came down again with an impression of blood on her hair and now on her gloves.

Muriel did not know how the hearts of these people had been wrung with the unending toll of children's lives levied by the traffic of the streets. The ancient Athenians mourned because they had to

send each year to Crete seven lads and seven virgins to be devoured by the Minotaur. Among the poor of New York the motor-Minotaurs go bellowing, hunting down and goring their own prey. More than a hundred children a year are killed in the streets. The horse-drawn vehicles destroy over half of these, but the automobiles, being newer and swifter, receive the greater hatred. When they can, the people take their own revenge on the ruthless or luckless drivers, and sometimes it needs quick work and hard, for the police to save them from death.

Muriel's chauffeur, Jacques Parny, (whom her father had brought over from France with the car he had bought there) had the unsurpassed fearlessness of the Frenchmen of our day.

The flying splinters of glass from the shattered windshield slashed him about the face and hands, but he stood up in front of his young mistress to protect her as best he could. And he howled at the howling crowd till a large boy named Tomsy O'Kin climber on the footboard back of him and broke a cat-bat over his head. Then Parny collapsed across his steering wheel.

A loyal servant deserves a loyal master, and Muriel, finding her chauffeur struck down, felt her regret change to wrath. She stood up in her turn to shelter Jacques Parny, and she was like a young hawk for ferocity, glaring defiance while the red drops trickled down her cheek. Then she saw across the heads and the waving sedge of arms and fists a little

P O C K E T S

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?"

Illustrated by
James Montgomery Flagg

man who knows his New York and deals with it as it is. "Empty Pockets" began in the September Red Book. A complete résumé of the first installment, so written that you may get the spirit of the story, as well as the action, is on page 1081.

group centered round the victim of the collision.

Those in whom sympathy is more instant than wrath had gathered there. Muriel saw the face of the child, all the whiter for the streaks of dirt. She forgot her anger and her danger in a swift remorse for what she had not caused. She fell to wringing her hands and ineptly maundering:

"Oh, isn't it pitiful! Oh, I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry! Oh, isn't it pitiful!"

There is nothing harder than to attack one who does not resist or protest or run. And Muriel was young and pretty, and fortunately no policeman appeared: for in the heart of the Gashouse district a policeman to fight adds the further zest of an old feud.

She opened the door of the car, and dropped to the ground. She might have been in the lobby at the opera from the way she repeated her polite "Pardon me" and "May I pass, please?"

THE crowd melted aside like water whist with wonder, then poured after in her wake. She made to the boy's side and gently persuaded his body from the awkward hands about him.

She set one knee on the foul pavement and leaned him against her other knee, and producing a ridiculously fine and tiny handkerchief moistened it at her lips and tried to cleanse that ancient little face of its immemorial dirt.

She kept saying:

"It's too bad, it's just too bad," and

then, "Couldn't some one get me some water, please?"

There was a panic of obedience. Tomsy O'Kin, the boy who had laid out the chauffeur with the club, ran and snatched a tin pail of beer from a little girl who was taking it home to her dependent parents. He was well scratched and kicked in the shins, but he gave the young Amazon a back-handed swipe against a hydrant, and she pursued him no further. Tomsy darted into a small deserted "French laundry," whose Irish laundresses were out with the mob. He emptied the pail into himself, filled it at a faucet, and ran off leaving the faucet gushing.

He was the first to arrive. A moment later Muriel was surrounded by all manner of water-carriers with all manner of vessels, mugs, pitchers, pails, hats, schooners. There was even one basket of water.

She soused her handkerchief in Tomsy's pail and mopped the little face well. It seemed to come out of the shadow into the sun. It was right white under the protecting layer of earth.

Muriel had learned what to do in many an accident, since the rich adventure much peril and encounter much injury. She had been thrown from horses; and her friends had been tossed into unconsciousness times unnumbered from saddles and traps and runabouts. And there had been mishaps on her father's country place. She had helped Italian road-builders when they were knocked



Muriel, finding her chauffeur struck down, felt her regret change to wrath. She was like a young hawk for ferocity, glaring and fists a little group centered round the child victim of the collision. She forgot her anger wringing her hands and ineptly maundering: "Oh, isn't it pitiful!"



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

defiance while the red drops trickled down her cheek. Then she saw across the heads and the waving sedge of arms and her danger in a swift remorse for what she had not caused. She fell to Oh, I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry! Oh, isn't it pitiful?"

over by fragments of rock from dynamite blasts. She had helped the sailors on her father's yacht when they fell down a hatchway or were hurt in the engine room.

She had acquired a knack for first aid and the stomach of self-control. But she was a little sick now because she felt to blame, and because her victim was so grotesque. Nature had been harsh with him before she came along to batter him to sleep.

As she huddled the body in her arm, and swabbed the soiled wounds, she asked:

"Who is he? Where's his poor mother?"

Tomsy O'Kin answered her:

"Hanigan his name is, lady—Happy Hanigan we call um. He don't belong round here. He's a newsy from downtown."

The victim immediately lost prestige and sympathy from the crowd. What right had he for to be getting hurted in their street? And making the nice girleen get her pretty clothes that dirtied up?

Finally Happy Hanigan opened his little eyes and screwed them about in angry wonder. He could not see Muriel's downcast face, for the sun was in his eyes. He blinked and wriggled, and then he opened his enormous mouth to say:

"Whatahell's a matter, huh?"

His language was abominably offensive to the ladies in the circle. Strangely enough, Muriel hugged him and smiled and laughed a little, and bent over to protect him from blame. Her face made a shadow now, and he could see her. The sunlight crinkled through her hair in a halo. He saw that she was beautiful, and now at last his big mouth wound into the famous grin that had won him his title of nobility.

"Cheese!" he sighed. "Who's de swell dame dat's noissin' me now? I guess I must 'a' croaked and it's a angel—a red-headed angel."

Muriel stamped a hasty kiss on a clean spot she had achieved and lifted him to his feet. He groaned anew, and his legs dangled so crookedly that she put him down again. She turned giddy with the dread that she had broken his poor bones.

"I must get you to the hospital," she

said, "Where is the nearest one?"

Happy fought loose and roared:

"Nah yuh dahn't! Yu dahn't git me to no horsespital."

Muriel stared at him. She had not realized that the poor are a little less fond of the surgeon's knives than the rich.

MEANWHILE, at last, a policeman was darting that way. He was cruelly disappointed to meet nothing more exciting than a newsboy bumped by an automobile.

Officer McGlashan found Happy leaning on a young woman suspiciously well dressed. It was suspicious for a young woman to be too well dressed along here. Besides, by this time Muriel's frock was so flecked and her hair so disordered and her face so unlike itself that McGlashan's first thought of her was based on experience and observation. He assumed that she was a wrong one who had wandered in her cups and fallen into a battle. It was not his fault if such things happened so often that he grew to expect them.

He began with his usual formula:

"Well, well, well! what's the matter now? What's the matter heer?" He laid his hand on Muriel's shoulder not altogether without pity, not altogether without contempt. Muriel looked down at his hand with such surprise that he took it away quickly. Her voice and her language surprised him further:

"My car ran into this poor child, Officer, and I'm ever so sorry. I can never forgive myself. I was about to take him to the nearest hospital. Perhaps you could direct me."

Her dialect was four avenues higher than he expected. He could only sputter with a last flare of dying superiority:

"And who's you, that's goin' to do so much?"

"I'm Miss Schuyler."

"Miss Schuyler, is it? and where might you live?"

He whipped out his notebook to record the incident in his log of the streets. When Muriel gave him the number, his pencil and his jaw both dropped.

"That would be Jacob Schuyler's house. You're no dahter of Jacob Schuyler?"

If he had asked her was she the daughter of King Jarge of England he could not have been more amazed when she nodded yes. From the equally astounded circle came a sigh of awe, and one reverent:

"My Gawd!"

Some of the women immediately began to take note of the cut of her suit. It was so simple that the design could easily be imitated, if not the fabric. Even Happy felt the eminence of the situation. He made to withdraw from the arm that nestled him under false pretences. But Muriel clutched him tighter and said:

"What are we to do with this poor child?"

Officer McGlashan glanced at her and accepted the flattering "We."

"Well, I suppo—ose we might—at leasht we'd betther—" he looked at Happy. He was more used to talking to the likes of him. He stormed: "And for you, you limb? What were you up to that you're blunderin' into people's cairs?"

From the safe niche of her embrace Happy leered at the copper and said: "Vah!"

Then the murmurous crowd heard the familiar hurried knell of the ambulance. An alley opened magically, and a Bellevus hospital motor rolled up. Some one had taken pride in summoning it. From its end-gate dropped a young interne in a white suit.

MURIEL noted first his immaculateness and envied it and admired it. It is the quality, some say, that women like first in a man. The surgeon noted first the abrasion on her forehead. He put his hand out toward it. She winced away and moved Happy toward him, smiling:

"This is the patient, doctor."

He had commenced "Doctor" so recently that he still thrilled to the title. He was young enough—and old enough—to be more interested in pretty girls than in crippled boys. But he obeyed Muriel's behest, and his fingers went like ten spies over the bruises on Happy's head. Happy's pride excited him almost worse than his contusions.

The surgeon opened his handbag, a compact little dispensary in itself, and

whisked forth cotton swabs, sterile bandages and adhesive plasters. Officer McGlashan did the honors:

"Docther, this is Miss Schuyler: old Jacob Schuyler's dahter, you know."

The doctor threw her a hasty glance as his fingers went on weaving the bandage. He grinned, assuming that the policeman was joking. Next to a reporter, an ambulance doctor has fewer illusions than anyone else in the world.

Muriel bent over him anxiously as he treated a scraped wrist. She murmured: "I—I'm afraid one of his legs is broken."

The doctor shook his head: "If it had been, he'd have let me know soon enough."

"But it's all—all—it's not straight," Muriel persisted, as tactfully as she could.

The doctor lifted Happy to his feet, and a glance showed him that what Miss Schuyler had thought to be a fracture was a congenital malformation.

He told Muriel so. The big words meant nothing to Happy, but volumes to Muriel:

"I knew a little girl who had that, and they brought over a great European specialist for her, and cured her. Why didn't this boy's parents—"

"This boy's parents are not importing specialists, I'm afraid. They're rather expensive, you know."

"But I should think they could save up enough or borrow enough for as important a thing as that."

The doctor smiled again with a pleasant sort of pity. "How can the poor save anything, and where could they borrow anything?"

"Isn't there any place where it could be done?"

"There's the Orthopaedic hospital, where they'd do it for nothing."

"Then why in heaven's name haven't they taken him there?"

"Everybody lets everything go—the poor especially. That's one reason they're poor. Then they get so tired and so dejected they don't want to do anything but rest." He spoke to Happy, whose grided skin he was sterilizing and bandaging: "Did your people ever take you to a hospital?"

Happy smiled: "Me mudder done it once, and a big guy dere wanted to harness me up like I was a horse and wagon, but I says, 'Nix on de rough stuff, Doc.' Me bones is me own, and I'll keep what I got.' I git round, don't I? And I sell as many papers as most of dese guys. Me mudder needs de coin I toin in."

Muriel said: "Wouldn't you be willing to take a little vacation now and get yourself all straightened out and—"

Happy pushed the suggestion aside with the flat of his palm, and a phrase of simple dignity:

"Nuttin' doin', lady."

"Then may I take you home in my car?" Muriel suggested, and Happy graciously consented.

"Oh, all right."

The doctor rose to his feet and put his hand out again toward Muriel:

"I'll have a look at that forehead now," he said.

Again she retreated: "Would you mind seeing to my chauffeur first? I'm afraid he's in trouble."

THE surgeon made sure that Parny's skull was not fractured. His strong hands were defter than a French dress-maker's as his peculiar scissors snipped away the clotted curls, which Jacques bitterly regretted. With delicate taps of cotton pledgets he cleared away the blood and disclosed the clean furrow in the welt. Muriel was fascinated instead of sickened by his exquisite speed, and she murmured:

"What a glorious thing, to be able to help people in pain!"

"Think so?" he sniffed. "Hold this."

He put a small phial of the tincture of iodine in her hands for reference as he painted Parny's flesh with it on successive bits of cotton thrown away as used.

"There's no other knowledge worth as much as that," she murmured again.

"Think not?" he said with a little less brusqueness. "And now it's your turn."

"Oh, I'm all right," she mumbled. She was a little afraid of this ingenious young man now.

"Sit down," he said, pointing to the running board.

She sat down. She had not realized

how weak her knees were till she relieved them of their responsibilities. She felt pretty miserable, and forlorn. And she was glad to have the expert hands of the doctor grooming her temple.

It was strange to think of herself there in the middle of the street, that street, surrounded by such a crowd, with an ambulance surgeon mending her wound. The crowd was roaring as gentle as a sucking dove now. The fierce housewives were conferring about her: "It's the sweet t' thing, she is." "And goin' for to take Happy home in the grand ottomobile." "A proud day for Mrs. Hanigan that her son's brought back in the like of that."

While the surgeon was at work, he had not failed to observe that the door of the car was marked with the initials J. S. They were small letters, but they carried a big message. Dr. Worthing could not have been human and failed to experience a certain added interest in so expensive a patient met in so cheap a street.

The surgeon was not exactly surprised to find that her skin was not of gold leaf, yet he could hardly convince himself that a girl could live in the sun of such luxury and be so modestly clad, so simple of manner, so pathetically pretty.

Muriel was even more thrilled than the surgeon was. He had come from the mob like a young hero out of a cloud. He had amazed her with his technic and his business-like philanthropy. He bossed her about a bit, too: gave her things to hold, and told her to sit down.

Muriel was just arriving at her hour for liking to be bossed. She was surprised to find herself almost delighting in her submissiveness; it was a novelty indeed for one who had bossed everybody else, servants, parents, chums, and attendant squires.

Her buoyant health had rarely placed her in a doctor's power. And never had the doctor been anything but old and plain. This young knight ambulant with his lancet at rest came to her in a suit of white armor. She trembled with delicious dread at his proximity. His ministrations were not unlike caresses, and when he put aside her hair and bathed the little wound on her brow, she blushed



JAMES MURKIN'S FLAG

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with pretty shame. She was amazed to feel so poignantly the tactile fire of his finger-tips, and cast down her eyes in a curious distress.

And he caught fire from her. He was awkward though he wished to be supremely dextrous. He was not so swift either, at his task, though this was not entirely unintentional. When he was about to touch her forehead with the tincture, she drew away protesting.

"It will stain."

"It's the best sterilizer there is," he answered, "and your hair will cover it. They're nearly the same color," he laughed brokenly, holding the phial under her eyes.

"Thanks!" she gasped indignantly.

"It's a beautiful color in the light," he explained, but she would not look. She wanted to be more indignant than she was, at his premature informality. He realized his own impetuosity at the same moment, gulped, "I beg your pardon!" and glared at the understanding mob ferociously.

WHEN he had cleansed and sealed the unimportant laceration of her important forehead, his assurance that she must be made of delicate fiber was revealed in his anxiety:

"You'd better be getting to your home, hadn't you?"

"Not till the poor boy is safe in his," said Muriel, glad to find some exorcism from the spell he had put upon her.

"Where does he live?"

"I don't know." She turned to Happy. "Where do you live—Mr. Hanigan?"

Happy had swelled up like a heated balloon at the prospect of the ride home, —the "Mr." almost exploded him.

He had to be asked twice where he lived before he could answer:

"Batavia Street."

"Then we'd better be starting. Do I look fit to be seen?"

Dr. Worthing was tempted to cry: "Fit to be seen in heaven!" but he thought better of it. She set to dusting her skirts, and she drew a lock of hair over her battle-scar.

"How's that?" she laughed, and regretted again her surprising friendliness with this stranger.

He dared not tell her how it was.

"Come on, Mr. Hanigan," Muriel cried and with the aid of the surgeon helped the boy to a seat in the tonneau. His shapeless awkwardness wrenched her heart again. It was intolerable that he should hobble so helplessly all his days. She knitted her brows as she put out her hand to the surgeon:

"Thank you ever so much, Doctor—Doctor—"

"Worthing—Clinton Worthing."

"Dr. Worthing," she finished, and reclaimed her hand. She bowed to the beaming McGlashan.

"Thank you, Officer. Good-by." She bowed to the glowing crowd: "Thank you, everybody."

As she was about to get in and join Happy (who was trying to look as if he owned the car) Muriel beckoned the Doctor and spoke to him in a low voice:

"It seems inhuman to let the poor boy go on through life such a cripple. There ought to be some way to get him cured."

"The city would do what it could for him, but it's long and costly."

"I'd be so glad to pay anything it might cost."

"That would help, of course."

She enraptured him by saying: "Couldn't you fix him up at your hospital? It would be nice to have him in charge of one who—who—"

She didn't know just what should follow that "who." He relieved her: "We couldn't treat him at Bellevue, but there's the Orthopaedic and others."

"How could I find out the best place and get him there? I'm so ignorant."

He stammered in disgust at his own confusion: "Why,—why,—I could arrange it for you."

"Oh, if you only would, I'd be so grateful!"

"It would be a pleasure, I'm sure."

"How soon could you look it up and let me know?"

He might have told her offhand, but he could not resist the temptation of another meeting. So he said:

"Some time to-day. I'll be off duty in the late afternoon."

"Oh, will you? You could telephone me at number—" He looked as if he had been struck in the face, and she changed

to "Or—it might be better to talk it over. You couldn't come up to the house, could you?"

"Oh yes, I could. Yes, certainly—"

"That would be splendid. You could have tea with me perhaps." He could only nod and try to keep from swallowing the lump of sugar in his throat.

"Fine," she cried. "At about half past four, or five?"

He bowed. The pavement was oscillating under him.

Muriel tried to tell herself that she had no more idea of kindling a flame in the young surgeon's heart than of encouraging every young fellow she asked to run and get her tennis racquet. She wanted to straighten out Happy Hangan, and she would use the time, money and skill of anybody that could help her. She tried to keep her cordiality to Doctor Worthing within the bounds of the polite casual. But some other self within her was mutinous and hardly to be restrained.

Miss Schuyler said haughtily, "Thank you a thousand times. At half past four then! Good-by." But the girl Muriel beamed on him through soft eyes like a Southern beauty rewarding a serenader beneath her lattices.

Miss Schuyler hopped into the car and slammed the door after her and lavished on Happy the kindest smile in her collection. But Muriel flung back one swift, sweet glance that deranged its victim and accomplished a compound fracture in his peace of mind.

The young surgeon gazed after Muriel and felt as lonely in the crowd as if he were Robinson Crusoe cast ashore. He sighed to himself: "If only she were a trained nurse; or better yet, if only I were a millionaire!"

CHAPTER VII

MURIEL'S life had hitherto revolved in a glittering circle. Now it was flying off at a tangent. That journey was like a condensed trip to foreign lands, beginning with a more or less Irish region, passing through Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Russia, Roumania, Greece and Japan.

They left behind the mysterious realm where the enormous gas tanks loomed like floating turrets of some grotesque architecture, and glided into a region where the people were foreign, the names on the signboards and the wares they offered foreign, and the advertisements in the Hebrew character.

There were evidences enough of the lack of riches in the overcrowding, the costumes, the things they were buying and selling, and the bedding bulging from the windows. Yet cheek by jowl with the sardine-can tenements sat every here and there some splendid building devoted to happiness or some other form of welfare; a manual training institute, a hospital, a children's aid society, a bank, a school.

Parks were frequent here, and in the open spaces children were playing games they had had to be taught. Muriel had heard something of these breathing-spaces and remembered reading that many of them replaced plague-sores of corruption. When Mulberry Bend and Corlears Hook had resisted the best the police, the preachers and the health officers could do in palliation, some genius had proposed their complete elision. Poultrices, caustics, and antiseptics having failed, an operation was suggested. Ugly tenements had been bought, razed, and their spaces united into parks, with roofed pergolas or buildings where the children could play when it rained.

Muriel thought that this was about the decenter and happiest thing in human history. Good people had passed through here; big hearts had taken thought for the poor, busied themselves as their brothers' keepers. These buildings, these parks, were like feathers fallen from angel's wings—anonymous angels and rather bound toward heaven than come from there, yet angelic somehow.

Muriel felt again that the weak and the luckless were in careful hands. She knew that her father and mother were always giving, giving, giving. First, she felt relieved of responsibility. Then she felt an awakening to it. Why should she leave these tasks to others? If everybody waited for somebody else, nobody would get anything done for anybody. She must

at least take from her parents their charitable labors.

Her heart seemed to cry out to this opportunity:

"Let me in. I want to be useful—as that nice Doctor Worthing is useful. I have a right to be useful. I am young and husky and I have lots of money—or my father has—and he always gives me what I want. Let me in!"

She resolved to plunge at once into the crusade. Youth-like, she was sure that she could accomplish marvels. She only hoped that she had not reached the scene too late, like a volunteer fireman who arrives after the fire is out: She was almost afraid that there would be no misery left to her to relieve!

She need not have worried, for that ferocious summer of 1913 was to be followed by a fiercer winter of almost unequaled length and bitterness, and the hard times were to throw upon the one town some 360,000 men who could get no work to do, and no pence to bring home to their women and children.

As Muriel sat panting thirstily and beaming with enthusiasm for a career of glorious charity, Happy Hanigan was sitting as high as he could, frowning majestically and trying to assume an automobile face. The nearest he could come to it was the look the judges wore in the Children's Court when they tried to glare more fiercely than they felt.

Suddenly along the entire length of his mouth there were signs of a skirmish between laughter and severity. Muriel smiled and asked him what was troubling him. That detonated his laughter, and he snickered:

"Cheese, but dis is better dan our horse an' wagon!"

Muriel exposed a strange indelicacy of surprise. She was snob enough to feel Mr. Hanigan's rise in the social scale. One cannot possess a horse and wagon and be entirely negligible. She asked with more respect: "Oh, you own a horse, do you?"

"Sure, we own a horse. Aint me fadder a truckman?"

"Really?"

"Sure he is. He's got a license and all."

"And is your horse a strong horse?"

"Well, he's cut close to de bone, and he wears his ribs on de outside. But he does what he kin. Whiskers does."

"Whiskers?"

"Dat's his name."

"Rather odd name, isn't it?"

"Wait till you see his feet. All four of 'em could use a haircut. And he's got a lower lip like a billy goat."

When they had run down the ladder of numeral-named streets, they came into the region of named streets. But the names meant nothing to Muriel.

She began to suspect that Happy was taking them out of the way for the sake of the ride. And he was. But eventually they came to the region where an arc of the first of the big city bridges soars above the roofs and where the white height of the Municipal Building thrusts icy pinnacles up and up into the sky.

Muriel found Batavia Street a narrow alley, a few hundred feet long. It reminded her of London in its air of being mislaid, in its brevity, and its gloomy antiquity. There was barely room for Parny to squeeze his big car between the sidewalks.

IN Batavia Street the tenements are not very high, and they have little wooden stoops set sidewise. It wrung Muriel's heart to see Happy negotiate the problem. She followed to help him. And inside the building the stairs were narrow and dark. She thought she would shriek at his boggling deliberateness; but he would not accept her aid.

His mother came running down to meet him, and her aid he accepted—also her caresses and kisses and her pet names and her anxiety. He was telling her all about everything while he panted up the stairs, and she was interspersing his narrative with exclamations of pious terror, as if the danger were to come instead of past.

Like the good fervent soul she was, she appealed to holy names with every breath. It was "Ah, the Lord love ye, darlin'!" "Oh, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and how was it you weren't killed?" and "Oh, merciful hour! Thank God for all things!"

Muriel was forgotten for the moment and was tempted to retreat, but Happy

called down to her to come up and meet his mother. Muriel climbed the rickety boards as meekly and breathlessly as many an aspirant for recognition had climbed the famous marble stairway in her father's home—the stairway whose ascension was considered so definitely a route to the social seventh heaven that it was known as "Jacob's Ladder."

Born on the peak, Muriel could not understand the fierce anxiety of the climbers.

But now she understood it by a sort of inverted reflection; she was climbing toward the antipodal height of poverty. She was the intruder, the aspirant, hoping that Mrs. Hanigan would accept her service and afraid that she might resent it as an impudence.

Mrs. Hanigan was in a difficult position. As a mother it was her duty to revile Muriel for the damage done to her son; also it was her duty to thank her for her subsequent courtesy. Hospitality urged her to ignore the former duty and do the latter. She put into Muriel's stout young fingers her toil-weary, time-worn little old hand and said:

"Good day and God save you: it's kind you were to the boy."

"I wasn't very kind to him," said Muriel, "but I want to be."

Mrs. Hanigan motioned Muriel to enter, wiped off a chair with her sleeve, invited Muriel to sit down, and stood meekly before her, with her head tilted wistfully to one side and one hand at her throat holding her waist together.

Muriel prepared to deliver her petition and coughed once or twice. Then she noted that Happy had toddled to his cot in the kitchen and fallen asleep as soon as he spread his poor bones across it. The shock had begun to show the drain on his strength.

Muriel beckoned Mrs. Hanigan into the hall for a secret conference on the matter of rectifying Happy's frame. The tears ran to the mother's eyes and scattered down her infinitely wrinkled skin like spilled shot.

In the mystic lottery of birth, she had drawn a crippled child, whose deformities had grown with him, a lifelong reproach and protest to his parents.

And now from the heavens a saint had

arrived promising a miracle by way of science and surgery—which are today's clay and spittle on the eyes of the blind, the "arise, take up thy bed and walk" of the halt.

Mrs. Hanigan accepted with gratitude and a promise of countless prayers for Muriel's welfare. She promised to break the news to Happy and to compel him to undergo the ordeal.

Then Muriel put out her hand in farewell and turned to descend the stairs. Mrs. Hanigan would have been less surprised if she had unfolded wings and soared away through the skylight.

As Muriel was listening to the endless reiteration of Mrs. Hanigan's gratitude, she began to take cognizance of a moaning. She asked Mrs. Hanigan what it might be.

"It's them poor Wops on the flure beneath," said Mrs. Hanigan. "Angelilly their name is; and I take shame to meself for complainin' when I think of what's put on thim. My boy Michael is twishted but I have him home. Their boy has been stolen on thim by the Black Hand. They have money where we have none, but they haven't enough for to pay what'll bring back their child. They're near destroyed with trouble. God sinds the childher to the poor for a blessin', but the black boy turns them into a sorrow."

Muriel pondered: "I wonder if I could be of help?"

Mrs. Hanigan was instantly alarmed: "You'd best be keepin' out of that. Thim Black Hand Ginneys is the terrible ones. They're like snakes in the dark. They'd kill a Christian as soon as an Eyetalian if you crossed their path."

Muriel was learning something of the modern demonology of the present day poor: the automobiles, the Mafia, the hospitals. Danger and bad luck assailed the poor most on the side of their children. The rich man's young are perishable freight enough; but the pauper's young must run endless gantlets of danger.

Muriel promised Mrs. Hanigan to keep away and hurried down the stairs. She was so afraid of the very mention of the Black Hand that she went along the next hall beneath on tiptoe. As she



She planted herself on her father's desk and thrust to the floor the unimportant papers of mere banking value. He watched her with soft pealing to his generosity, and picturing again the scene she had witnessed. He watched her with soft Merithew cried out in a burst of emotion as he swallowed hard and batted his wet eyelids:



She talked to the old man as to a child, pleading, promising never to bother him again, if he would yield only this once, ap- eyes but his mouth was firm and his head swung back and forth with never a dip of consent. At length Perry "I'll tell you, Miss Muriel, you persuade your father to lend me ten thousand, and I'll give you half of it."

was passing the fateful door, the voice of a woman within broke out in an anguish of impatience at fate:

"O figlio mio! figliolo mio!"

Muriel had spent a winter or two in Italy and learned to like the people. She liked everybody she knew. She felt the human urge impelling her feet to the door. But fear carried her on, though the reiterated wail went through her heart like a thin stiletto.

She moved doggedly down the first few steps of the next stairway, but that mother's call for her son seized her as with a mother's hands, and she paused.

There was the sound of a younger voice comforting the older. Somehow that courage touched her deeper than the agony, that old glorious watchword of mankind, "Let us be strong." She heard it here in this tenement: "*Siamo forti, madre mia.*" She wavered, then turned about, mounted the steps, went to the door and tapped softly.

THERE was a silence. She tapped again; then came a feeble call:

"Chi è là?"

"Un'amica," she answered.

"Entri!"

Muriel pushed the door open timidly and paused, once more a social aspirant in another caste. She had a sense of Italian large eyes further enlarged with wonder.

On a backless chair the woman whose wails had troubled the building sat crouched, tearing her hair and clawing her cheeks. She was only thirty, but she was already a grandmother. She looked up through her claws now and stared through streaming eyes at Muriel. Across her lap lay her latest child, an infant exhausted with its unheeded shrieks.

At her side stood her eldest daughter, herself a wife and not yet fifteen. In her left arm she held a naked chubby *bambella*. It stood on her narrow hip and fed noisily at her young breast, as unmindful of grief as the tiny kitten that lay supine on the floor and sparred with the fringe of the red table cloth.

As Muriel faced the gaze of the puzzled women she felt like apologizing for an unpardonable infringement on the privacy of their grief. But she had crossed the Rubicon, and she could not retreat. She paused at the door-sill to compose her offer of services, in lugubrious Italian.

"I—o—ho—io ho udi—udito vostro —" She could not remember the word for "crying." The elder woman stared dumbly; the younger answered:

"You did hear my mawther cry?"

"Yes," Muriel gasped, grateful for the rescue. "I was passing. I heard. I thought I might help."

The elder mother frowned and tried to grasp Muriel's meaning. She tugged at her daughter's apron and muttered:

"Che dice?"

The younger mother translated in an undertone the nature of Muriel's visit. The elder woman answered resentfully. Muriel caught the words "*casa di settlement.*" They took her for a settlement worker. This, strangely, did not make her welcome. She could not understand why. But she explained with a timid confusion that won their hearts how she had been calling upon Mrs. Hanigan and had learned of their grief and could not go past the door without at least telling them how sorry she was.

Once more the women conferred. Then the girl brought forward a chair and said "*Favorite di sedere.*"

The social struggler had captured another stronghold.

MURIEL extracted the story of the theft of the child after some difficulty. The mother Teresa was incoherent with grief, but the daughter Gemma was fluent in English, for all her accent. She said that her father, Angleo Angelillo, was an ambitious man who kept a bakeshop and tried to advance himself with a few side-lines, such as ice and wood and fruit and a boot-blackening stand. He thought he had no enemies. He had kept clear of the feuds brought over from Italy or compounded here.

Continued on page 1231 of this issue.

April's Lady

By Justin
Huntly McCarthy

A delightful little love story, the second of the short stories by the brilliant Englishman who wrote "If I Were King" and "Charlemagne."

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

IT was an April evening that he met her, when he was taking his daily walk through the Park. He was going at his usual headlong tilt, and she ran so quickly round the corner that when they crashed into each other, he instinctively flung his arms round her and for a moment they swayed together in silence. Then, with an hysterical little laugh she disengaged herself.

"I'm so sorry," she panted. "It's all my fault. When there's no one looking I always run in the Park. It's a bad habit." Her voice trailed off a little, and he noticed how white she was.

"There is a seat here," he said. "You must sit down." In spite of a protesting murmur from her he put a hand under her elbow and helped her to the chair. She looked laughingly up at him as he stood before her, and he felt something almost like a shock at the blue beauty of her eyes.

"I'm quite all right now," she said. "And I don't want to keep you any more, as it is evident you were in a hurry." The memory of their collision renewed, they both laughed.

"How do you know I don't run, too, when there's no one looking?" he answered. "The spring wind makes one want to move more quickly."

"Oh," she said, "do you feel like that too? It seems such a waste to spend one's free hours in sober walking. The little hour of freedom....." She stopped abruptly, and her manner changed. "Thanks very much for finding me a seat," she said, rising and speaking more

stiffly. "I must not detain you any longer, and I ought to be going home myself."

He felt a pang of disappointment.

"May I not see you home?" he said hesitatingly. "I am sure you must still feel shaken."

"That is quite unnecessary," she answered decisively. "I am quite all right."

She bowed slightly, then turned and walked quickly away. His dismissal was absolute, but so unwilling was he to let her go without finding out her name, that he had taken several steps after her before he stopped himself. He watched her slight figure for several minutes as she walked evenly away from him. He half hoped she might look back, but she did not, and with a little sigh he turned and resumed his homeward journey.

The usual smell of cooking, the usual bedlam of sound, greeted his senses as he opened the door of his house. The din of some one murdering the "Merry Widow" waltz told him that Maudie had returned from school. A complicated odor of onion and burning sugar gave him a prophetic insight into the particulars of his coming dinner, and a voice raised in controversy warned him that his aunt was in one of her worst tempers.

He coughed loudly and rattled his stick, as he placed it in the rack. As by magic the discordant noises ceased, and the next moment his aunt appeared, an uneasy smile struggling with hastily-quenched anger.

"Is that you, Dick?" she asked, with forced affability. "I didn't hear your

latch-key as usual. Aren't you rather early?"

"Yes, I got off from the office sooner than usual," he replied. "What's the trouble downstairs?"

"The old story," she answered. "She'll have to go. Such waste, such idleness, and impertinence, I never came across before. I should just like to tell you what she said when I questioned her about that last pound of butter. She looked me up and down, and answered as calm as you like—"

Her nephew stopped her gently.

"Don't tell me what she said if it upsets you," he cautioned. "You know men don't understand much about these things." Then, noticing the cloud on her face, he added dutifully: "How's the lady help doing?"

Mrs. Wynnet looked triumphant.

"Of course she's only been here a week, but she's a most hard-working creature. She keeps at it all day, and above all, is most bid-able."

"Poor little devil," Dick muttered to himself. He had never seen this lady-help his aunt spoke of, but he was heartily sorry for her. Feeling that he had done all that duty required, he nodded and went into his own room. He felt as if he had got into another world when he closed the door behind him.

"I am a good-natured fool," he said to himself. "But I am a fool."

It was two years since he had come to live with his aunt, Mrs. Wynnet, and never a day passed that he did not regret that act of kindness. On the two occasions when he had summoned sufficient hardness of heart to hint to his aunt his intention of finding other quarters for himself, she had shown such an interesting exhibition of grief, little Harold clinging to her on one side, and Maudie bellowing on the other, that he had



"I'm so sorry," she panted. "It's all my fault."

given way in despair. He knew that Mrs. Wynnet's grief was far from being simulated, and realized fully that the weekly sum he paid her in exchange for his comfortable suite of rooms and his well-cooked meals must go far toward keeping the household going.

After all, she was his uncle's widow. It was hard for her to be left almost penniless, with a huge house on her hands for which she could find no tenant. If it were not for her constant ill-temper, her complaints of the procession of servants that came and went in her service, and if it were not for the odious Maudie with her pig-tails, her spectacles, her strumming on the piano, and her sneaking ways, if it were not for—

Here Dick Power broke off his medi-

tations abruptly. Of what use was it to catalogue all the draw-backs of the establishment? It was getting on his nerves a little, he told himself, and therefore better banished from his mind.

With a sigh of weariness he threw himself into the most receptive of his arm-chairs and lit his faithful pipe. Through the clouds of smoke he seemed to see a pair of vivid blue eyes smiling into his.

It is a recognized fact that if one wishes to meet a person with whom one has no appointment, the chances against it are about a million to one. Though Mr. Power left his office early the next afternoon with the distinct purpose of trying to meet the blue-eyed girl again, yet his heart almost seemed to stop beating when he caught sight of the slender figure among the trees. The unlikely thing had happened. She was not running to-day, but walking sedately. He moved quickly after her, and reaching her side, raised his hat.

"Good afternoon."

She looked surprised but not displeased.

"Is it

you?" she said, frankly extending her hand. "You see I no longer dare run."

"May I walk a little of the way with you?" he questioned, as they fell into step. The girl shrugged her shoulders. "What's the harm?" she said after a pause, almost, as it seemed, to herself.

"No harm at all," he answered quickly. "And what's more, a lot of good. There is something I want to say to you."

She looked up, interested.

"Is there?" she said. "Do say it; it's not often anything interesting happens in the day."

He paused for a moment to arrange his ideas; then he said abruptly:

"I've taken a tremendous fancy for you."

She rewarded him with a peal of laughter.

"How funny you are," she trilled, but he went on quickly:

"I don't want you to laugh at me, because I'm in real earnest. I want you to take everything in the spirit that it's meant. And I don't want you to be 'missish' either, and after I've said everything, answer 'You are very impertinent,' and walk off with your nose in the air."

"But that's not fair," the girl replied quickly. "You've said I'm not to be 'missish' and now I sha'n't be able to object to anything for fear you'll point at me



Through the clouds of smoke he seemed to see a pair of vivid blue eyes smiling into his.

and say 'Yah, *Miss*.' It really isn't fair."

Power laughed.

"What a dear you are," he said. "No, you are not to object. Why shouldn't I say what I think? But first of all, let me present myself." He took a card from his pocket and gave it to her.

"Mr. Richard F. Power," she read aloud. "Fifty-four Nevins Terrace, W."

There was a silence, and then she raised her eyes to his with a searching look which puzzled him a little.

"Wont you tell me your name?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm Daphne Benson," she said quickly.

"Daphne, Daphne," he repeated. "What a beautiful name. I always loved it, but I didn't know till now that it was my favorite name of all."

"You are talking a great deal of nonsense," she answered. "And I think it is time I was getting home."

Power laid a hand on her arm.

"No, don't go," he said. "I want to strike a bargain with you; I want to throw myself on your pity."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, this. I am a very lonely man. I am a bachelor, and my home life, through

various circumstances, is practically nil, and what there is of it I wish were 'niller,' if I may use the word. I don't take easily to people. I'm a solitary sort of chap. I've taken a tremendous liking to you, if you'll let me tell you so, and I beg of you to let me have a little of your companionship."

He spoke earnestly and pleadingly, while she again looked searchingly in his face, and seemed to be satisfied with what she saw.



"I don't mind adding that I have my strong suspicions that she's no better than she should be."

"I'm all right," he said simply in answer to the question he imagined. Impulsively she gave him her hand.

"I agree," she said, and added, a little huskily: "I'm rather lonely, too."

Power was more pleased than he cared to show, and there was a pathos about her last words that stirred his best feelings.

"Please let me be a real friend," he said gently. "And tell me something about yourself."

"Oh, everything about me is very commonplace," she said. "I'm a governess. We used to be quite well off, but when my father died we were left unexpectedly badly off, and when my mother died soon after, I had to shift for myself. And here I am."

"Poor child," Power said softly. "You, who were made to be petted and taken care of!"

She flushed a little at the pity in his voice.

"Oh no, not at all," she said quickly. "I'm very independent, really. And then I've been so lucky. I have a perfect place—so easy and comfortable and well-paid, and the children are so nice."

"I see that you can dress charmingly," he said, looking at her beautifully-cut suit.

"Oh yes," she answered lightly. "I'm quite rich—though as a matter of fact this is the one suit I still have left from our days of affluence. It is all only a year ago."

She said no more, and it was evident that she did not wish to go into further particulars about herself. The talk between them drifted to other matters. He soon found that she was well-read, honestly and wisely fond of books and music and the beautiful things of life. When they finally parted, he had made her promise that she would see him again the next day at the same time. She refused to let him accompany her home, and as he watched her walk off alone, there was an ache at his heart.

Their meeting next day was the first of many that followed, dear, delightful days, fair ministers of spring. Power was astonished to find with what eagerness he looked forward to this hour of the afternoon. The whole day seemed to

have but one meaning—the leading up to the moment when he should see her. His home life was becoming more intolerable than ever.

As a matter of fact, he felt it was time he had a house of his own, quite time. And the house should have a mistress. Daphne's face floated before him. . . . He had realized for some time how much he loved her. The next afternoon he would ask her the most important question in the world. All these thoughts passed through his mind as he sat at dinner in his own room in his aunt's house. Through the portière over his door the sound penetrated of his aunt's voice doing battle with some one. Presently there was a knock at his door, and his aunt herself appeared.

"You would hardly believe it, my dear Dick," Mrs. Wynnet bawled, "if you did not see it yourself. The laziness, the incompetence, the high-mightiness!"

"Who is it this time?" Power questioned. "I have not yet mastered the name of the new cook, but taking it as Jane, what has Jane been doing?"

"Cook!" Mrs. Wynnet shouted. "It's not the cook. It's that lady-help I took in out of charity. Lady! Ha! There's too much lady about it to please me, and I don't mind adding that I have my strong suspicions that she is no better than she should be."

Power felt suddenly nauseated.

"We none of us are," he said wearily. "Anyhow, I have some work to do, and so—"

Mrs. Wynnet instantly fussed to the door.

"Of course, of course, I understand. You must forgive my bothering you. But it's such a relief to me to come to you now and then. Sometimes I feel I shall sink under all the worries I have. As to this girl! . . . Well, I'm taking means to find out—" Power did not hear what the means were, as he had already shut the door.

The next day, he was at their usual meeting-place a little early. To his chagrin, Daphne was more than a little late. When at last he caught sight of her approaching figure, he ran forward to meet her, but he was disappointed at her manner of greeting him.

"I've only come to say I can't come," she said hurriedly, her eyes hardly looking at him. He noticed with anxiety how pale she was.

"Daphne," he pleaded, "I've got something special to say to you. You must stop."

"No, I can't hear it; I must go," she answered, looking anxiously at every figure that appeared. Suddenly she started.

"Good-by," she panted, giving him both her hands, "good-by, and thank you for being so nice to me."

And before he could stop her she had darted off. He looked round, hoping to find some reason for her evident consternation. In the distance he thought he saw a familiar back, with a pair of familiar pig-tails hanging down it.

"Surely there aren't two pairs of such knock-kneed legs in London," he thought to himself. Those legs and those pig-tails in conjunction could only belong to Maudie, his cousin, "Maudie the sneak," as she was endearingly called. Mr. Richard Power walked home in a very thoughtful frame of mind.

There was such a hubbub going on at Nevins Terrace that the noise of his latch-key failed to make itself heard. A babble of voices was coming from his aunt's sitting-room, through which, however, his aunt's tones triumphantly emerged.

"Your conduct, quite apart from your laziness and uselessness, makes me give you immediate notice. I could not have such a person in my house. You admit this man is no relation, that he is nothing to you, that you met him by chance."

Power listened with all his ears for the answer, but a gentle murmur was all that reached him.

"I saw them holding hands," Maudie's squeaky voice was saying, as Power pushed open the door and entered.

He saw his Daphne leaning against the table looking pale and scared, and opposite, wagging a threatening forefinger at her, stood his aunt, with her face at its reddest and angriest. Daphne, growing scarlet, turned abruptly away. His aunt did not look too pleased to see

him, and instantly began an explanation.

"Another domestic upset, dear Richard," she began. "I am obliged to part with Miss Benson for unlady-like conduct. Meeting a perfectly strange man, letting him talk to her,—holding hands! Well, I have found out."

Power crossed the room to where Daphne stood, and planted himself accusingly before her.

"Where is the comfortable post of governess, where the enormous salary, where the delightful children?" he questioned.

Miss Benson shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, I hate being pitied," she said. "I loathe being an object of sympathy. It isn't likely that a girl like me with an ordinary education would get the post of governess with a huge salary, is it? And as I knew who you were, I didn't want you to know where I was."

Power shook his head.

"This is worse than I feared," he said. "Meeting strange men and then deceiving them. You are quite right," he added, turning to his aunt. "The position is an impossible one. There is only one way of repairing it. Miss Benson, will you marry me, please?"

Miss Benson traced a pattern on the carpet with the point of her shoe.

"I don't think so," she said slowly. "I told you I hated pity and all that kind of thing."

"You little wretch," shouted Power. "How dare you talk like that? And how dare you refuse me simply to gratify your inordinate pride? You know I have adored you from the first moment I nearly knocked you down. I was going to ask you this afternoon, but you wouldn't stop to listen." He dropped his voice. "Don't you care for me a little bit, Daphne?"

Miss Benson raised her blue eyes from the carpet.

"You know I do," she whispered softly.

Mrs. Wynnet felt perhaps she had made a mistake, but she was convinced of it when she saw Mr. Power catch the lady-help violently in his arms, and kiss the lady-help's lips.

Mr. McCarthy has the versatility of the really big writer. His "The High Explosive," in the November Red Book, is a story of great plot and world-wide power.

The Happiness of Three Women

By Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "Whose Wife?" "The Turnkey," etc.

CRAIG faced the most difficult problem imaginable. It involved not only his own happiness but that of three women: the woman he had once loved, the woman he hoped to marry, and a good wife and mother. How did he decide?

ILLUSTRATED BY J. HENRY BRACKER

CRAIG steered his runabout through the train-meeting traffic in front of the pretty brick railroad station with the exaggerated caution of a helmsman guiding a barque through a school of icebergs. In front of the waiting-room, he sought to bring the car to a graceful stop. This he did by the simple expedient of "going into first speed" and simultaneously jamming down the footbrake. With something like a sigh of disgust the grossly insulted engine stalled.

"Fourth time to-day," observed Craig, addressing the station policeman. "Some day I'll learn—if any of the car is left by then."

He dismounted and went to the platform, just as the five-ten express from the metropolis grunted in. Craig eagerly scanned the scattered score or so of men and women who left the train by the various exits along its hundred yards of expanse. Then the pleased expectancy died out of his eyes. Somewhat wearily he turned and made his way toward the street.

"So there are two of us," observed a white-clad woman, coming alongside and falling into step with him. "Two disappointed souls. Cheer up, Billy! Don't look as if there'd never be another train. If I can stand it, you can. I came down to meet my husband. And yet I'm not scowling because he missed his train. I'm bearing up beautifully."

"You set me a wondrous example in Christian resignation, Constance," he answered. "It's a pity Mr. Barr isn't here to get the benefit of it."

"If he were, there'd be more credit for being resigned. It's amazing how easy I find it to be brave when he doesn't get home on time. You came to meet Myrtle Gale, of course? I saw her go down on the eight-twenty this morning. Did she know you were coming to meet this train?"

"I told her I'd try to. She—she must have been detained."

"*Sherlock Holmes*," she mocked. "Never mind, Billy. After you're married, she'll be so glad to have you bother to come and meet her at all that she won't dare be 'detained.' Engaged girls have the beautiful heroism of ignorance. Is that your new car?"

"Yes," he said. "My new and first and only car. And unless I learn to run it better it's likely to be my last. This is the first time I've had it out without the trainer. I passed my examination this morning—by a miracle; and I celebrated by driving to the station this afternoon all alone."

"To have your first real ride in it with Myrtle?" she suggested with quick understanding. "What wretched luck!"

"She'll probably be on the six-thirty-seven," said Craig. "I'll come for her then; and she and I will still have time for a little ride before dinner."

"Mark will probably be on the same train," she replied, "but I'm blest if I'll bother to come all the way down here again in this heat to meet him. Billy!"—struck by a new idea—"we've both of us nearly an hour and a half to kill before our respective proprietors return to claim us. Take me for a ride. Do! It's been so hot to-day. And an hour's spin in the country will blow away my cobwebs and my blues. I *have* the blues to-day, Billy. Honest, I have."

"No!" said Craig, on impulse. "I—"

But she did not hear him. Unaided, she stepped into the runabout, seated herself and turned on him the face of a child that is in happy mischief.

"Come!" she exhorted. "Isn't this jolly? We'll go up as far as the Hook Road. There's always a breeze at the top of the hill up there. We can do it and be back before half-past six. Come!"

Perforce, Craig obeyed. He noted the drowsily interested gaze of a group of station loungers, the glances of one or two better clad people on the far side of the street. He could not order this very pretty and very impulsive woman to get out of his car. He could not well walk away and leave her in possession of it.

AS Craig hesitated, he saw a station loafer nudge another and grin. He got aboard, without further attempt at argument, and began to woo the stalled engine to wakefulness by means of the foot-gear self starter.

"I'll drive you to your house," he said as the runabout at last buzzed into motion.

"My house?" she echoed. "Indeed you wont, Billy Craig. If you think I'm going into that stuffy house when I can get an hour's glorious ride, you're mistaken. Turn this way."

"That'd mean I'd have to turn on a side hill," he argued. "And I'm not sure I know how to."

"It means you aren't going to turn at all," she gently corrected him. "Why, Billy, one would actually think you didn't *want* me to ride with you."

"I don't," he made answer.

"Are you being cross?"

"Maybe. But it's true, just the same.

And when we get to the next corner I'm going to take you home."

"Why don't you want to take me riding?" she urged, in no way offended. "You did it often enough in the old days. Everybody knows—"

"Yes. Everybody knows. But that's no reason why everybody should suspect. Besides, Mr. Barr—"

He hesitated.

"Go ahead!" she adjured. "What about my angel husband?"

Craig sighed—and in disgruntled surrender went past the corner without turning.

"All right," he agreed. "Come along. We may as well be hanged for murder as for arson. We've already been seen riding together by the veranda-guard of twenty of our friends, since we left the station. It can't make matters worse if we go on to the Hook. And in any case, now, Myrtle wont be the first girl I'll have taken riding in my new car."

"I'm sorry!" she said, all remorse. "It was silly of me not to think about Myrtle. Of course you wanted her to be the first to ride with you in your car. It was horribly thoughtless. Forgive me, Billy, wont you? You know me well enough by this time to know I'm always doing the wrong thing and then being sorry when it's too late. Turn back, if you like, and take me home."

"No," he said, stubbornly. "We're going ahead. And I'm sorry, too. I'm sorry I was cranky about your coming along. Let's forget it and—"

"You started, a minute ago, to say something about Mark. You began to say: 'Besides, Mr. Barr—' And then you stopped. What was it? I ask, only so we can get all the disagreeable things out of the way, in a lump, and then enjoy the rest of the ride. What about Mark? Or will Mark keep?"

"He hasn't told you, then?"

"Told me what? He tells me so many things, usually, when he's been off on one of his sudden business trips."

"Only this: he called at my office nearly six months ago and said he'd be very much my debtor if I'd keep away from his house in future."

"Billy, I don't think much of that, for a joke. What is the point?"

"I don't know. And it isn't a joke. It really happened."

"He—Mark—told you to keep away from our house?"

"Not in so many words. But that was the idea. I gathered, from the way he talked, that he'd spoken to you about it, too."

"He never dared to! Tell me what he said."

"I've forgotten the precise words. The idea was, that he knew you and I were engaged once—"

"I told him that before I married him. I never made any secret of it."

"And he said the fact of your jilting me then wasn't a sign that—that—"

"Go ahead,"—as he hesitated again in embarrassment. "Put it in English. I won't be angry. Only, Billy, I *didn't* jilt you, and you know it. We just both got to be such good friends and chums that there didn't seem to be any sense in our getting married. I said so to Mark. He understood. Go on with the rest of the things he told you."

"Oh, he said—he said there were lots of cases where a woman had thought she didn't care enough for a man to marry him; and yet, after she married some one else— Say, Constance, I hate to talk this way, to you—I—"

"You don't need to. I understand. It's a hobby of his, that idea. The jealous ninny!"

"Constance!"

"I mean it. And on the strength of that absurd French-novel theory of his, he asked you to stop coming to see me? I wondered why you dropped us."

"I supposed you and he had talked it over beforehand. And, anyway, when a man asks me not to call on his wife, the only thing I can do is—"

"Oh, Billy, I'm so ashamed—so sorry you should have had such a thing like that said to you! We've always been such pals, you and I. When you stopped calling, I supposed it was because you and Myrtle—"

"I hadn't met Myrtle, then. But now you can see why I didn't like the idea of driving with you to-day—especially past the houses of a lot of your friends—and his."

"Oh, some kind idiot will tell him,"

she laughed, harshly. "And tell it as a quaint, harmless joke. And he and I will have one of our pleasant *Othello* scenes."

"I—"

"Oh, I don't mind. It rather amuses me. Just the same, I sometimes think he's a little crazy on jealousy. If ever he had reason to believe there was any real cause for jealousy, he would either kill me outright or else he'd divorce me with all the publicity and noise he could get."

"Constance?"

"Don't worry. I'm not going to give him a shadow of cause: I don't love him and I don't pretend to. I never did and he knows I never did. But I don't love any other man, and he ought to know that too. Our marriage was a fair give-and-take. He had money that I needed; and he thought I had social standing that he wanted. That was all—except that he was foolish enough just at first to think he cared for me. Each of us paid the price. There's a price-mark tacked on everything in this dreary old world, if only you'll look close enough for it. I've always kept my share of the bargain. But when he throws crazy jealousy into the scales and forbids my oldest, best friend to call on me, it's more than the contract calls for. And I'm going to tell him so. Don't think I'm horrid to speak this way about Mark, please. I wouldn't, to anyone but you. Now let's talk about something nicer, and get the good of this cool. What time is it?"

Craig glanced at the clock on the dashboard.

"Oh," she said, "I never noticed that. Only half-past five; and we're at the Hook Road already! We must have been doing all sorts of things to the speed limit to get out here in fifteen minutes. And we used up the whole time being grouchy. Let's ride on a mile or so farther, shan't we? It's so quiet and sweet out here in the real country. We can get back to the station in fifteen minutes, from here. We know that. And the train isn't due for over an hour."

THEY rolled on, down into the sunset valley beyond, and around the right-angle curve at the base of a farther hill. The wind splashed refreshingly into their hot faces, and the hum of the en-

gine was restful. As of old, they fell to talking of a hundred minor topics, each with a time-perfected knowledge of the other's moods. Craig was finding it easier than he had expected to guide the light-running little runabout over the smooth highroad. Indeed, the task that so recently had taken up all his attention was fast becoming a matter of instinct. And he gave scant conscious heed to it until, glancing down toward the brake, his eye fell again on the clock. It still registered five-thirty.

"The thing's stopped!" he exclaimed, in his dismay pressing down with both feet as he leaned over to gain a better view of the clock.

Promptly and jarringly the car came to a standstill—stalled once more.

"I—I didn't mean to do that," he apologized. "You see—"

"I see," she retorted. "And I felt it, too. I read a poem once, called 'The Song of the Engine.' *Your engine's song ought to be 'I Hear You Stalling Me.'* But how did you happen to say 'The thing's stopped,' *before* it stopped?"

"I was speaking about the clock."

"The clock? Why—why, it's just the same time it was when we were back at the Hook Road. I never realized, before, what a wonderful time-saver an automobile can be. But—oh, Billy, suppose you should miss the six-thirty-five! What would Myrtle say, when she found you'd missed it on my account? Look at your watch."

Craig was already pulling his watch from his pocket.

"Miss the six-thirty-five?" he ejaculated. "That's a real possibility, I'm afraid. It's twenty minutes of seven, now. That measly clock! I forgot to wind it, I suppose. And—let's see. We started about quarter past five, didn't we? Then it's taken us an hour and twenty-five minutes to get out here. That means we can't get back till—till after eight."

As he spoke, he was laboring with the pedal-connected self starter. The oft-stalled engine was showing a marked tendency to sulk. At each kicking shove of his foot, Craig strained his ears for the answering purr from under the hood.

"I used to figure out," he panted between strenuous kicks, "that there were

twelve thousand things I knew nothing about. Now I see it's twelve thousand and one. A supposedly fool-proof little motor car scores the extra one. It's too bad, Constance, to make you late for dinner like this. I hope Mr. Barr won't be angry."

"My dear boy," returned Constance, easily, "was there ever a husband who wasn't openly or secretly angry when his wife came home late for dinner? For a wife to be late for dinner in her own house is one of the sixty-four unforgivable domestic crimes. Or, rather, it is sixty-three of them. And, when I'm a solid hour late, Mark will have begun to worry, too. Does anything rile a man as much as to find he's been worried over nothing? Yes, altogether, I fancy the very best I can hope for is a lecture."

"That's a shame! It's all my fault."

"It's nothing of the sort," she denied. "I kidnaped you. You didn't want to come. You know you didn't. I brought it on myself. Don't worry. A lecture doesn't bother me. My ears are getting callous spots in them. Only—I think I'll let you put me out a block or so away from the house. It won't greatly add to the sweetness of Mark's temper, if I drive up to the door with *you*, after keeping him waiting so long."

Through her flippancy, Craig read uneasiness. And he redoubled his back-breaking efforts to start the engine. A final and lucky kick at the starter's pedal set the machinery going. Awkwardly, he turned the car around on the broad road and put on all the gas he dared.

"We'll go back faster than we came," he promised.

"We can go back still faster," she amended, "by taking the first—no, the second—no, I think it's the first—by-road to the right. I rode out here two or three times on horseback. The by-road goes over the farther shoulder of that first hill, and it runs into the Hook Road about half a mile from the turnpike. We'll cut off nearly a mile that way. It's that by-road just ahead there, where the dead chestnut is."

SLOWING for the curve, the car left the macadam for the soft dirt and ruts of the narrow lane she indicated.



They moved jerkily ahead, while the storm rolled up over the murk of the mountain tops to meet them. Then the lightning banished darkness. By one flash, Craig was able to catch a glimpse of his watch dial. Constance, over his elbow, read "Ten-thirty-one." By this time they had stopped talking.

The tires sank deep into the shifting sand and gouged rackingly into thick strewn ridges and hollows.

"This may have been an ideal road for horseback riding," commented Craig between bumps, "but for a mere auto' it leaves a whole galaxy of things to be desired. Where did you say it leads to?"

"To Dublin, by the feeling," she groaned as a half-imbedded boulder and a hollow behind it shook the breath from her lungs. "It runs into the Hook Road, I said. Can we go a little faster?"

Craig put up the gas by a notch or two. A stretch of sand, with a ridge of grass between the wheel-ruts, promptly absorbed the extra speed-effort. Then began the ascent of the hill's spur; and the rhythmic jar of "first speed" added to the increasing number of bumps as a corrector of sluggish circulation.

"Which road now?" demanded Craig, as the lane forked abruptly.

"The—the left. Yes, I'm sure it's the left. Of course. It must be. It leads toward the Hook."

For a few rods the new road was fairly straight. Then it began to zig-zag eccentrically between rock shelves and knolls, always twisting high and higher into the hill.

"It's like the place where *Rip Van Winkle* saw the gnome rolling the keg," said Constance Barr. "We must look like a hill-climbing-auto' advertisement. There!" she added. "We're at the top. Now we go straight down, over the shoulder of the hill. And in about five minutes we ought to reach the Hook Road. I hope all this racking and bumping isn't hurting your car."

"On the contrary," he said, in grim dissent. "I hope it's suffering tortures. I'm getting to hate the thing. It lies in wait for me, and stalls every time my back's turned. Don't mind if I keep quiet for a few minutes, now. We're going down what seems to be a blend between the dry bed of a waterfall and a precipice side. Perhaps if I concentrate on working the car, we may even be lucky enough to get to the bottom alive. I don't want to seem too optimistic or fill you with false hopes; but we *may*."

For the next few minutes, Constance held on like grim death to the side and

back of the seat, while the runabout careened and pitched and bumped crazily down the winding, rock-strewn track. When the bottom was reached, she said in sudden fear:

"The rise wasn't half as long as the descent. And we're in a hollow between two mountains. The Hook Road runs along the side of the first hill. We must have passed it."

"If we did," he returned, "it was disguised as a rock pasture. We haven't passed so much as a path. Are you sure this is the way you came on horseback?"

"No," she faltered. "I'm sure it isn't."

"Then the only thing to do is to turn back and—"

A report like a cannon cracker's split the dusky silences. With a little cry, Constance gripped the man's arm as he brought the car to a standstill.

"A blow-out," Craig explained briefly.

In automobile advertisements and in motor fiction, a blow-out is remedied in from five to eight minutes, according to the skill and concentration of the correctly dressed young man in the leather leggings and square jaw. Craig, like the average novice with an inborn mechanical deftness, consumed the better part of an hour and a half in repairing the damage and in making the car fit for use again and himself unfit to look at. Darkness had fallen long before he was through.

Perched on a roadside boulder, Constance superintended the task. Whenever he looked at her, she smiled with truly phenomenal cheerfulness. By the time the extra tire was in place, the smile—mercifully hidden by the darkness—had worn thin.

Craig helped her into the runabout and looked at his watch.

"Quarter of nine," he answered her unspoken question. "Best go straight on. The trail must lead out somewhere."

"I doubt it," she demurred. "It leads nowhere. The fiend who made this trail got just this far and then died of remorse."

Onward—preceded now by the twin swords of white electric light from the lamps—chugged the car; and ahead, the mountain road merged more and more into a mere track.

Up the side of one hill the runabout toiled its uncertain way, down into the ensuing hollow, and presently up a slope that seemed to have no end.

"This isn't a hill. It's a mountain," declared Constance. "If I hadn't read so often that Mount Everest is in the Himalayas I'd be certain—"

A roll of thunder broke in on her labored cheerfulness. The muggy heat of the day was to be followed by an atmosphere-cleanser.

Twisting and turning and ever rising, they moved jerkily ahead, while the storm rolled up over the dense murk of the mountain-tops to meet them. Then the lightning banished darkness. It played almost incessantly. By one flash, Craig was able to catch a glimpse of his watch-dial. Constance, over his elbow, read "Ten-thirty-one." By this time they had stopped talking. And as Craig put back the watch in his pocket, the first drenching downpour of rain soured them.

It was nearly one o'clock when the car steadied itself as it struck into a less primitive road. Two minutes later the turnpike was beneath its ragged tires.

There had been two punctures and another super-obstinate stall; and the engine had long since begun to "knock" and "miss." The storm had passed, leaving the night Egypt-black, and the man and woman drenched to the skin.

"We're on the main road!" announced Craig, breaking an hour's silence as the car swung out on the macadam.

"What main road?" asked Constance, her voice dead.

"I don't know. But it's a main road, anyhow. And it will lead us back home or to a railroad station. This car's pretty nearly all in. The gas must be about gone, too. And some one with more sense than I must see what makes the engine thump so. *Good!*"

The exclamation followed the sight of a lighted window a half-mile distant.

"We can find out, there, where we are; and maybe get something dry to put on," he explained.

Presently they were at the entrance of a doorway between high stone walls. Above the gate was a sign—too high for the car's lights to illumine it.

"An inn or a roadhouse," pronounced Craig. "That means there'll be some one here who can tinker with this blessed car for me."

They stopped at a deserted veranda. Craig helped the soaked and stiff-limbed woman to alight. They stumbled over a rocking chair or two, and he hammered at the front door. After some delay the door was opened by a shirtsleeved, yawning man, apparently a servant.

"We close up here at one, sharp," the yawner greeted them. "No exceptions, either. New police regulations. Went into effect last week. I'm sorry."

"We've lost our way," said Craig. "We're soaked to the skin and we're half starved; and there's something the matter with my car."

He unostentatiously slipped a bill into the servant's hand. The man, peering keenly from one drenched figure to the other and thence to the numeral "10" on the corner of the bill, apparently decided that here was no police or excise trap.

"C'mon in," he vouchsafed, after a pause. "I'll rustle you some hot coffee and sandwiches, and I'll see if I can do anything for your car. Don't want to put up for the night, I s'pose?"

"No!" cried the woman, a break in her brave voice. "No. No! I must get home the minute I'm able to. Oh, do fix the car if you can. How far is it from here to Blank Terrace?"

"Blank Terrace?" echoed the man. "Must be somewhere about twenty-two mile, I guess."

"Where's the nearest railway station?"

"Couple o' mile. But they's no trains till the seven-eighteen—the one I'm goin' on. It's a straight road from here to Blank Terrace—macadam all the way. Sit down in here and make yourselves comfortable," he went on, ushering them into a private dining-room. "I'll put some coffee on for you. 'Twont take but a few minutes. I'd give you some whisky, but I dassn't. Besides, the boss has locked up the bar. They watch us like a hawk these days."

He shuffled off into the cavernous darkness of the inner passageways. In a creditably short time he was back with a tray whereon were a pot of hot coffee,



Wide eyed, dumb, her fatigue-whitened face flushing scarlet, Constance led the way. On the veranda they met the returning inn-servant.

cups and sandwiches. Leaving the tray on the table in front of the wordless couple, he set forth, lantern in hand, a can of gasoline under his arm, to inspect the car.

Food and hot drink finally began to lessen the numb misery of fatigue and discomfort. In five minutes the refugees had found their tongues.

"There's nothing I can say or do to help?" Craig began. "If an explanation to Mr. Barr will improve matters I'll gladly—"

"An explanation? From *you*? Heaven forbid! No—if ever we do reach home again, you must let me get out a block from my house and go the rest of the way alone. My only hope is that he won't find out it is *you* I was with. What's the matter?"

Craig had lifted his napkin to his lips as he finished his second cup of coffee. He sat now, staring aghast at the name lettered in red on the corner of the linen. Constance's gaze followed his.

"*Meadowside Inn.*" they read.

Craig guiltily dropped the napkin. He knew his whereabouts well enough now. He was in the most brazenly notorious and disreputable roadhouse in the State—a place in which no decent woman and few semi-decent men would care to be seen. Moreover, he was there, at one-fifteen in the morning, with a woman who was good—a woman whose husband was crazily jealous.

"Let's get out of this!" he muttered, starting for the door.

Wide-eyed, dumb, her fatigue-whitened face flushing scarlet, Constance led the way. On the veranda they met the returning inn-servant.

"Car's all right," was his report. "It'll get you back home safe enough. I've filled the gas tank and I've tinkered a bit with the engine. Gee, but you folks must have taken that poor little car through the wars! It sure looks like the Last Hours. Looks like you had—"

"What do I owe you for the gas?" interrupted Craig shortly.

"Me? Nothin' at all. It's the boss' gas, not mine. You squared yourself with me. If he kicks, he can kick. I won't be here to get any of his jawin'. I was fired last evenin'. And I'm leavin' on the

seven-eighteen in the mornin'. Lucky for you folks that I am. For if I hadn't sat up late, packin', I'd never have heard you knock. So long!"

CRAIG piloted the car down the drive toward the turnpike. As they reached the gate and prepared to turn out into the road, a second car flashed past, bound in the same direction as themselves. To avoid a collision, Craig halted his runabout in the gateway. As he did so he wrenched the wheel sharply to the left. The driver, coming down the main road, evidently saw their lights for the first time as they emerged from between the high sides of the wall that bounded the inn grounds. And, fearing collision, he too brought his car to a jarring stop, not twenty feet from the runabout.

For a moment or so, the powerful electric lights of each vehicle poured a white glare over the other.

A grayish-haired man—the driver and sole occupant of the second car—stared in wondering recognition at the two, and half raised his hand to his hat.

Then, apparently thinking it more tactful under the circumstances to show no sign of recognizing either of them, he put his car into motion and vanished down the road toward Blank Terrace.

"He—he *knew* us!" gasped Constance. "It was Mr. Fletcher, the paying-teller at the branch bank at home!"

"I know," answered Craig, dully. "I know. I saw him. And—and he saw us. And he saw where we were coming from."

"THE most marvelous, unbelievable luck!" announced Constance, entering Craig's law-office soon after breakfast. "Mark didn't come home at all last night—not at all. He was kept in the city on business, and sent a telegram. He didn't even 'phone. He never got in until eight o'clock this morning. And then he just came for a change of clothes, because he's putting through some deal that will keep him busy all day. He left the house half an hour ago to catch the nine-fifteen to the city. So now he'll never know. Isn't it the most unbelievable luck? I had to stop in on my

way from the station to tell you. I knew you'd be worrying. Isn't it splendid?"

"I'm glad," answered Craig, heavily.

"What's the matter?" she demanded, quick to note the strange inflection in his voice. "Are you ill?"

"No. Have you read the *Bulletin*?"

"No. I haven't even looked at the city papers yet. What is it? Nothing—*surely* nothing about—about—?"

"No. No. Nothing about us. But the branch bank here on Rowden Street was robbed early this morning."

"Well, what of it? Are you a depositor? I'm not. Why should that make you—?"

"Wait. The night watchman caught the thief at work in the vault. They grappled, and the thief knocked out the watchman and escaped with something like \$15,000—but not before the watchman recognized him. And, in the scrimmage, the watchman accidentally grabbed a queer little charm the thief wore on his watch-chain. He still has it. And there are twenty people who know it belongs to the thief. So at three o'clock he was arrested."

"Who was he?"

"The watchman swears—and the time-clock proves it—that he grappled with the thief some time between quarter past one and twenty minutes past one, this morning."

"Billy, what on earth are you driving at? Who is the thief and what has—?"

"The thief," said Craig very slowly, "the thief—or the man who has been arrested and who the watchman swears is the thief—the man who owns the watch charm—is Jonas Fletcher, the paying-teller."

"Jonas Fletcher?" she repeated dazedly. "Why, it can't be—what time did you say the robbery happened?"

"Between one-fifteen and one-twenty this morning."

"But it *couldn't*. At twenty minutes past one we were leaving the—that place out there. And we saw Mr. Fletcher. There couldn't be a shadow of doubt about it. And he saw us—and knew us. And that was more than twenty miles away from here; and—and he was coming from the opposite direction."

"Yes. I know. But the watchman's

testimony and the evidence of the watch-charm are enough to send him to State's prison for something like ten years. He has a wife and children, too. He declares he was miles away from here at one-twenty—says he went to bed at nine, with a headache; he couldn't sleep, so at eleven he went downstairs and out to his garage and took a spin in his car for about fifty miles. He got back at quarter before three, he says, without waking any of his family; and he was just getting into bed when the police came to arrest him. No one believes his story."

"But—but it's *true*! We can both swear—"

"Can we?"

"Of course we can. Why, we—"

"Can we?"

"What do you mean, Billy?"

"Can we go into court and testify that we were coming out of Meadowside Inn together at twenty minutes past one, this morning? Can we?"

"Oh!—I—"

"We can't even prove that we were lost and stopped there just to get something to eat and to fix the car. Don't you remember, the man who waited on us said he was fired and was getting out on an early train this morning? Well, he went. And he left no address. I called up the Meadowside before I left home and found out that much. No one else there knows anything about our visit."

"Billy!"

"So you see how we stand."

"Oh, Billy, *what* are we to do?"

"That's what I'd give the traditional 'ten years of my life' to know. We're in a cleft stick. It's a deadlock. If we tell the truth we'll save Fletcher. If we don't tell it, he will go to prison."

"Oh, we *must*—"

"If we tell the truth," went on Craig, unheeding, "will any man or woman—especially woman—believe you're innocent and white and straight? Will anyone believe we could possibly have got lost in broad daylight, not ten miles from home, and knocked around mountain roads for six hours and then have come out by sheer accident near the Meadowside Inn—two mountain ranges away? Will anyone believe the true version of how we came to be there and how we

left? Plenty of people who know us saw us ride out of town together yesterday afternoon. When those same people hear that we were seen leaving Meadowside Inn at nearly half-past one in the morning—"

"They mustn't! They *mustn't*," she wailed. "Oh, Billy, you don't realize what it would mean. You know how Mark is. You know how jealous he is of *you*. If he heard—"

"Yes," said the man curtly. "Strange to say, I'd thought of it. I've even been so selfish as to think just a little about myself and—Myrtle. That would mean the end for me, with her, of course."

"*Would mean or does mean?*" she challenged.

"I—I don't know. I don't know."

"He'll—he'll *kill me!*" wept Constance, hysterically. "At the very least, he'll divorce me. And everyone will believe—oh, Billy, we *mustn't speak*. We *mustn't tell!*"

"I hear Fletcher's wife's an invalid. And one of his children's delicate, too," said Craig, irrelevantly. "Ten years in prison is a long time for a wage-earner to leave his family in disgrace and without support. And when he gets out—an old man and an ex-convict—"

"Oh, *help me, Billy! Help me!*"

"When I got to the office just now, I found a note from Fletcher asking me to come around to the station house and see him. I'm going there. I'll call you up later and let you know. Good-by."

WITHOUT heeding her impulsive effort to stay him, the man walked hastily past her and out of the office.

In the captain's room at the Blank Terrace police station, Craig, in his professional capacity as a lawyer, was allowed to talk alone to the prisoner. Fletcher's lined face was a mask, devoid of emotion. His voice was lifeless. As soon as the two men were left together, he asked quietly:

"Well, Mr. Craig, what are you going to do?"

"I have been asking myself that



"Mr. Craig, before you decide to save one woman's happiness, remember Mrs. Barr is not the only woman involved. No, and the woman you want to marry isn't the only other one. My wife—" Fletcher checked himself, as though ashamed of his momentary tendency to plead, and relapsed again into his former dead apathy.

question for the past hour," replied Craig. "And the answer hasn't come."

"I hoped it had. That's why I asked you to see me."

"The situation is impossible," broke in Craig, almost petulantly. "In 'Under Two Flags' and 'Prisoners' and a lot of other stories, I've read of men who had to decide between sacrificing themselves and sacrificing a woman. For her sake, they couldn't tell the truth that would save them. That's an old situation. But, when a man's own skirts will be kept moderately clear in any case—where the choice lies between wrecking an innocent woman's life and sending the innocent husband of another woman to prison—why, that puts a new and rather baffling angle on the case. There's no precedent or convention to go on. By the way, how about the charm the watchman claims he tore from your chain in the struggle?"

"I lost it from my chain sometime yesterday. I don't know when. It probably fell to the floor in my cage at the bank, and he picked it up."

"Then he's the thief?"

"I suppose so," assented Fletcher, in cold disinterest. "The money's gone. He probably got it—he or some accomplice who learned the combination. And, by using my lost watch-charm and that struggle yarn, they fastened the charge on me easily enough. It's very simple."

"Then you aren't building on the alibi of our seeing you twenty miles away at that hour?"

"That's why I sent for you. I'm no fool, Mr. Craig. I know your reputation is good; and so is Mrs. Barr's. If I, as a suspected criminal, try to clear myself by saying I saw you two at a certain place at a certain time and that you both saw me—well, that statement is worthless unless you and she both care to substantiate it. If you choose to deny it, my unsupported word will go for nothing. I might as well swear I saw the President of the United States and Sarah Bernhardt coming out of the Meadowside, together. No one will believe me. And, oddly enough, there's nothing but your testimony that can help me. For my wife

motored out to the Meadowside Inn early this morning to find some record of your being there. The Inn people say—and she believes they're telling the truth—that neither of you were there. So I seem to be at your mercy."

"I see," gravely agreed Craig. "It all rests in my hands and in Mrs. Barr's. Without our testimony you will be convicted. With our testimony you will be cleared."

"Yes," said Fletcher dully.

"Without our testimony," went on Craig, "Mrs. Barr's good name will remain untarnished. I shall be able to marry the woman to whom I have the honor to be engaged. My personal reputation and my law practice won't be shipwrecked by a dirty scandal. If we testify in your behalf, Mrs. Barr will forever be branded with the Scarlet Letter and will become an outcast. I—"

"Mr. Craig, before you decide to save one woman's happiness, remember Mrs. Barr is not the only woman involved. No, and the woman you want to marry isn't the only other one. My wife—"

FLETCHER checked himself, as though ashamed of his momentary tendency to plead, and relapsed again into his former dead apathy.

Through the brief silence Craig could hear Constance Barr's terror-stricken cry:

"He'll kill me—at the very least he'll divorce me! And everyone will believe—Oh, Billy, we mustn't tell!"

"It's—it's a deadlock!" he muttered. "I must think, man! I must think! I'll send you word of my decision."

Craig left the station house. Along the shower-washed sunny streets of the suburb he moved like a sleep-walker.

All at once, he halted in mid-street. From his face the cloud of feverish doubt and misery was swept as by miracle. And in his eyes glinted a light of cold, unshakable resolve.

His choice was made. Once and for all, his course—for better or for worse, for right or for wrong—for sanity or for sentiment—was taken.

The next of Mr. Terhune's true-to-life stories will be in the November Red Book. Watch for it October 23rd.



The Heart of Harno Shan

By James Francis Dwyer

Author of "The White Tentacles," "The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal," etc.

A treasure tale from the Far East, written by the one man of the time whose pen can paint with the colors Kipling's once commanded.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. B. FALLS

AHAZE-SMEARED sun flung a million lances of flame upon the mudbanks. The black mire bubbled beneath the scorching rays. Myriads of crawling insects that the tropical heat filled with a mad restlessness, rushed backwards and forwards on the slimy surface. The malaria wraiths, evil-looking and poisonous, rose from the hot slime and floated away over the mangrove trees like attenuated ghosts.

Hochdorf, the German naturalist, striding over the viscid mud, halted suddenly, leaned forward in a peculiar crouching attitude, and watched Ford, the tall American. Ford, who was in the

lead, had become curiously alert. He was moving cautiously, every muscle taut, and the keen blue eyes of the big German were fixed upon him. The American was gazing intently at a spot immediately in front of a ridge of stunted thorn bushes that grew out of the sticky slime, and Hochdorf waited.

The half-score Dyaks who followed the two white men also had noticed the actions of Ford. They halted, their brown faces washed with a wave of expectancy. The cautious movements of the big American carried to them a message which they understood thoroughly. The Dyaks knew that he was creeping upon a common enemy,

For half a dozen paces the American advanced slowly. He paused for a few moments, then gave a quick leap forward. The heavy club he had been carrying hummed as it cut through the motionless air, and Hochdorf straightened himself as the squirming serpent tried to wriggle into the thorn bushes to escape Ford's attack.

"Himmel," that is some snake!" cried the naturalist.

"He isn't a small fellow," said Ford, quietly. "Ugh! The brute turns me sick!"

Hochdorf mopped his forehead as he watched the American batter the life out of the big serpent that had been coiled on a patch of mud baked by the sun; then the German walked slowly towards the velvety shade of a big *tapang* tree which grew upon the edge of the slushy stretches over which they had been walking.

"I think we shall call a halt," he said, turning to address Ford. "This sun is just a little bit too hot to take liberties with. It is as hot as the boiling springs above Segora."

The American assented readily, and from the shade of the *tapang* tree the two white men watched the actions of the half-score Dyaks who carried their specimen cases and provisions. The native porters had clustered in a semi-circle around the dead snake. With grave faces they stood around the serpent for fully five minutes; then at a signal from their grizzled leader, each man in turn bent slowly down and tapped the mud with a smooth, dark-green stone which the oldest Dyak had taken from a pouch made of monkey skin. The solemn, impressive manner in which each stooped and rapped with the stone gave to their actions the appearance of a strange tribal ceremony, and Ford, impressed by the proceedings, put a question to the naturalist.

"Why are they doing that?" he asked.

"It is one of their little beliefs," answered Hochdorf. "Ja, just a little belief. There is a particular hell for snakes, and they think that each tap of the green stone will send his snakeship a thousand leagues deeper into the place he has gone to. It is one of those little beliefs that

make the East what it is. It is those odd stunts that hit one in the face at every turning and make one feel that this place is ten million years old."

Ford watched the natives and wondered as he watched. He thought how strangely in keeping with their actions were the pulsing heat and the weird loneliness of the jungle. An aching silence was upon the steaming mud-banks. Beyond, a barrier of gloomy green, rose the massed mangrove trees, and Ford felt that the little ceremony over the dead snake lifted him up and carried him back into a past thousands of years removed.

The American spoke of this feeling to his companion, and the German naturalist nodded his head.

"You are right," he said. "It does lift one up and march one back through the centuries. There is in each one of us what the Chinese call the 'elder memory,' and our ancestors might have rapped over snakes. *Ach*, they might have! We have changed, but the East has not. Here in the Orient, beliefs of this kind grow as strong as the bronze pillars in the ruins of Pe-Lung. Every little breath of wind makes them grow stronger, and every little leaf that falls onto this old land makes it harder to upset them."

THERE was silence for many minutes while the big German studied a huge lemon-colored hornet that he had captured while the hornet was loading himself up with the sticky mud. Then Hochdorf spoke again.

"Talking of beliefs," he said, "makes my thoughts go back to the Heart of Harno Shan. I recall it now because it makes me think of these beliefs and how hard it is to upset them. In the matter of the Heart, I saw one upset. That—"

The German paused. He put the hornet in a small specimen case and peered across the stretches of steaming mud. "This silence is unholy," he said. "It makes one think that something queer is taking place just beyond that mangrove belt that we cannot see through. I will try and break the stillness with the story of the Heart of Harno Shan. It is a story of one of those beliefs that make this Orient a little bit different from the

Occident. The East is the East because there are ten million little things like that snake ceremony which are accepted without question. That is so. I have lived out here for five and twenty years, and when I see anything like that which you have just seen, I look and say nothing, my friend. I am not one of those fools who laugh at something which is new and strange.

"You have never heard of the Heart of Harno Shan? *Nein*? It is a story that is as red as the roof of the temple at Sliel. It is one of those stories that are taken up by the breezes that sweep across the yellow waters of the China Sea and is whispered into the ears of all men.

"This took place six years ago, six years next May. I remember that May. I was camping at Raloon, and one dark, wet night when it looked as if the Malayan god who rides on the monsoon was abroad, I heard a cry that came from the bank of the river. It was that dark that you could cut the darkness into little cubes and build things with them. *Gott*, it was dark. I nearly broke my neck as I stumbled across the clearing down to the river that was choking and gurgling as it crept up amongst the trees, and there I found a man clinging to a mangrove root, a man who was that weak that I had to pick him up in my arms and carry him up to my bungalow.

"I put that man to bed, and for three weeks I nursed him. He was delirious during those three weeks. Night and day he babbled, babbled till my ears ached and my brain buzzed as if a swarm of black flies were in my skull. And it was of one thing he talked. He talked of the Heart of Harno Shan.

"You have not heard of the Heart of Harno Shan because you have not been long in the East, but it is a story you can hear from the Pettah Gate at Colombo to the Bund at Yokohama. It is one of these stories that travel without tongues. *Ja*, it is. It is a treasure story, and the breezes carry a treasure story so that the Khas and the Polaks, who speak a tongue that only the *lieber Gott* can translate, understand the tale.

"I had heard a lot about the Heart of Harno Shan. I am not much interested in loot, but one must listen to

stories. I heard tales about it that made the hair stick up on the back of my head, and all those stories came up in my mind as that man babbled night and day. *Ach*, he drove me mad, talking always of the one thing, talking always of the Heart of Harno Shan. Do you know why he always talked of the Heart? He had it, my friend. *Ja*, he had it. He had it in his money-belt when I carried him up from the river and put him to bed.

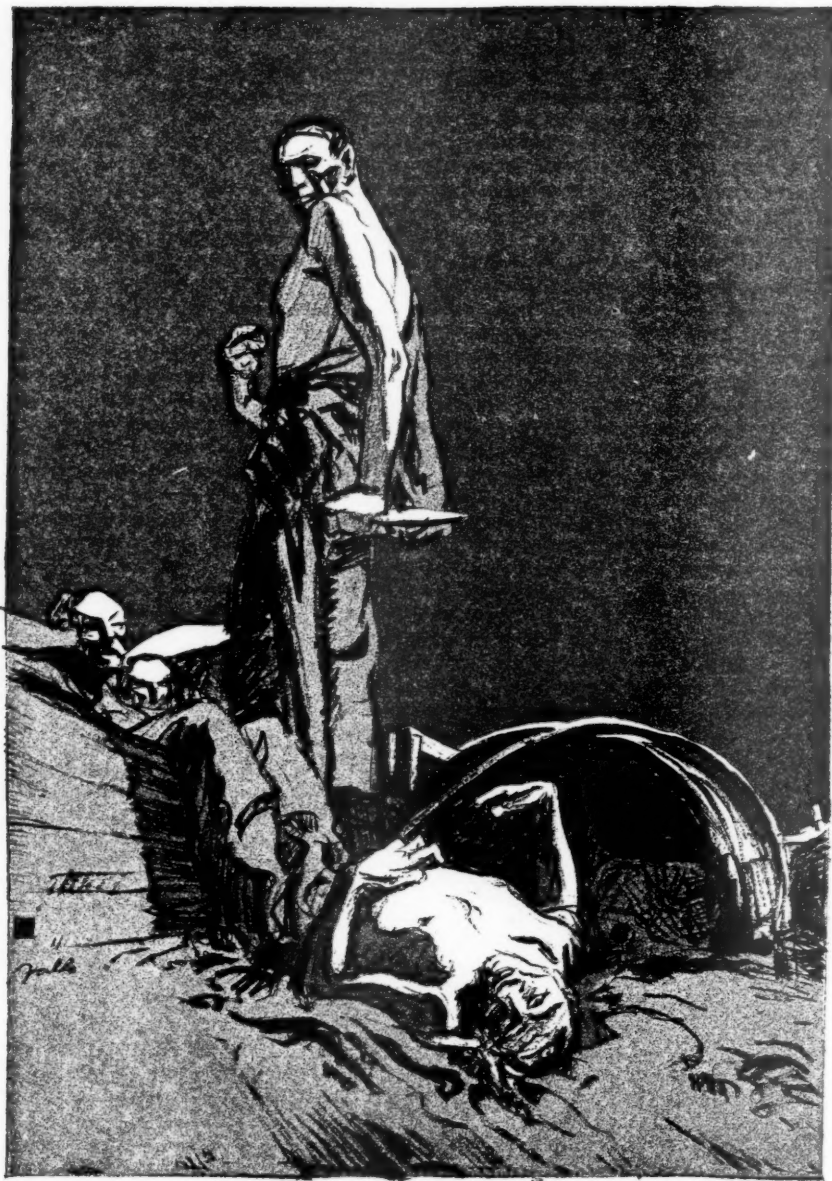
"You have never seen the Heart of Harno Shan and I cannot make you understand what a thrill it gave me when I saw him take it from his belt. While he was delirious he took it out and kissed it and cried over it. *Himmel*, those songs that he chanted thrilled me as I listened to him and watched the Heart of Harno Shan that he fondled. Watched it, I tell you, as it sucked up the rays of the sun and flung them back like blood-red lances of living flame.

"One of those songs I remember. It haunted me for years after the Heart went out of my life. It has always remained in my mind. It goes:

"Red as the drops that Gautama spilt
To show the Chief of the Krins his
guilt,
Bright as the eyes of the Hindu maid
Who the hand of the murderous Askani
stayed,
Heart of Desire and Heart of Strife!
From your blazing bosom the sun takes
Life!

"I remember that song because I thought as the man thought who wrote those six lines. I did so. It was a wonder gem. It was the greatest jewel that I have ever seen.

"**N**OW I will tell you why it was called the Heart of Harno Shan. Harno Shan was the greatest pirate that the Chinese coast has ever known. He was so. He shed more blood than the Black Butchers of Prule or the Seven of the Red Hand. He was a devil, an out-and-out devil. Up and down the coast from the Anambas to the Chusan Archipelago they told little stories of Harno Shan that would put your teeth on edge, stories that gave you a squirming feeling in the inside, my friends. He invented bizarre ways of torturing people,



The man who killed him to get that ruby in his possession did not keep it two hours.

ways that were altogether new, and his methods brought results. They brought him information about hoards of gold and jewels that had been kept secret for many a year because no one with the inventive powers of Harno Shan had come along to get the information. He had Torquemada and Diego Deza looking like little potatoes, when it came to making people uncomfortable.

"This Harno Shan was a magician as well as a pirate. He did sleight-of-hand tricks that made his crew think he was in league with every Chinese devil in the calendar. He was a great sleight-of-hand man, so they say. When he got the Heart in his possession he called his crew together and told them that it was impossible for anyone to murder him, because his heart was a removable heart that he could take out of his body when he was going to sleep. And that old yellow devil showed them how he did it. He put his two hands over his tattooed chest and clicked his long fangs together, and next minute, he held in his hand something that was shaped like a heart and which glowed as if it was filled with the very blood of life itself. Wait, my friend, and I will tell you of that Heart as I saw it. As I saw it! You will know then how it surprised that crew. *Himmel*, it surprised me, and I have seen some jewels in my time.

"That crew of yellow fiends that the pirate had under him stared at that thing which Harno Shan held in his claws, and after they had stared their fill, the skipper made believe to put it back into his sinewy chest again. And they felt certain that it had gone back into his chest, all but one man. There is always a doubter. Old Johann Bruickhaizer would not believe that a cannon-ball traveled fast enough to cut a man in two, and when he was dying with his legs cut off at Sedan, he said he did not believe it then, because it hit him when his back was turned. This man was like old Johann. He had seen big rubies before, not as big as that Heart, but big enough to make him feel certain that it was an enormous ruby that Harno Shan had pretended to take out of his bosom and put back again. He knew a little of that old pirate's sleight-of-hand tricks, and

the next night he managed to drop a sleep pill into Harno Shan's glass of *samsu*.

"When the old pirate slept, that enterprising gentleman crawled up and put a knife under his fifth rib, took the big ruby from Harno's money belt, dropped overboard and swam ashore.

"My friend, how long do you think it took that great ruby to make itself known from Pulo Condor to Akkeshi Light? A long time, you think? Well, you are wrong. *Ja*, you are wrong. Within three months men were whispering of that stone on the Bubbling Well Road at Shanghai and telling of its beauty as they steered their pearling luggers south to the Aroo Islands. Why, you ask? That stone was alive! It was alive, and it began to drink up the blood of those that loved it. *Gott*, it did! The man who had taken it from Harno Shan and swum ashore with his knife in his teeth, held that big ruby for two days. Only for two days! The man who killed him to get it did not keep it in his possession for two hours.

"THE wonder tales were beginning to spread. *Himmel*, that stone passed from hand to hand quicker than chain lightning. It did so. And it always passed in one way. You know what that way was? The hands that reached out to get the Heart were always stained with the blood of the man they were taking it from. It drank blood! Ay, it drank blood! Men won it with a knife or a revolver, a *barong* or a club, and up around the Heart of Harno Shan there rose a belief, one of those beliefs that I told you grow out here as strong as the bronze pillars in the ruins of Pe-Lung. They said that the Heart of Harno Shan had to be won with blood. They said that the hands that would fondle it had to be stained with the blood of the man who was too slow to protect it, and that it was impossible for anyone to get possession of it in any other way.

"Where it came from or how Harno Shan had got possession of it, no one knew. Some said that the old pirate had got it from a Russian princess whose life he had saved when he plundered her yacht off Haitan. But I do not think

any Russian princess ever owned the Heart of Harno Shan. *Nein!* That stone came from one of those great secret hoards of the East that have not seen the light for years and years. *Ach*, there are treasures out in this East that would make all the court jewels of Europe look like three cents! Up in the hills above Samarkand, they will tell you of the Magic Pearls of Genghis Khan, pearls that they say were as big as wild guavas. They fell from the saddle-bow of the Emperor and rolled down a cleft in the hills. And they say they are still there. *Ja!* On sunny days, the people look down into the cleft and think they can see them shining at the bottom of the deep ravine. That is so. I have listened to them tell stories of those Magic Pearls until I grew to believe that they were there myself. I have stared down into that cleft in the hills and made myself believe that I could see them shining like little stars hundreds and hundreds of feet below me.

"And there are other stories just as wonderful. Thousands of them. The Rajputs tell of the wonderful breast-band of jewels which the Emperor Babar brought from Herat to place upon the snowy bosom of his bride, Maham Begum, and which was stolen from him as he crossed the mountains to Kabul. They say that those jewels are still somewhere in the mountains, and I believe they are. *Ja*, I believe they are. It was from hoards like those that the great Heart of Harno Shan came. I am certain of that. Nothing was known of that big ruby till the Chinese pirate did the sleight-of-hand work when he tried to bluff his men that it was his heart, and if it had not been in a hiding place, thousands would have heard of it before then. Gems as big as the Heart of Harno Shan are alive, my friend. They send out curious tales of their wonder to the world, and that old pirate could never have kept that one a secret.

"The belief grew that the Heart had to be won with blood. That big ruby, big as the golden fist of Buddha at Ta-Lai, left a trail of blood behind it to prove the truth of that story. *Ja*, it made history, did that Heart. Up and down these yellow waters it started stories that grew

and grew. Sailors chanted songs about it, songs that told of its size and its shape and of the wonderful glow, more wonderful than the dawn above Sembasi, that came out of its pulsing heart. It became the one thing that every adventurer craved to possess.

"And to me, camped down there at Raloon, in a place where I felt certain that no white man was within a hundred miles of me, came the Heart of Harno Shan, the heart with two score and more deaths in its history. Mind you, that was from the time it had been taken from Harno Shan. How many had died to satisfy their longing for that thing since it was first torn out of the earth, you or I could never guess.

"That man brought it, and in the weeks of delirium that followed his arrival, he babbled of the big jewel that he had won with a knife—*ja*, with a knife. He had won it as others had won it, by spilling blood, and in his delirium he told how the Heart grew more wonderful and more beautiful because of the blood that was spilled on its account.

"I LISTENED to Millard as he lay babbling of that stone. I listened to him. Night and day I listened. My brain was crazy with his words. He would take that big ruby that glowed like the eye of an evil demon, from his belt, and while still delirious, he would stroke it with his fingers and kiss it like a madman! I had to sit and watch him do that. I could not take that big stone from him. On that first day I tried to make him hide it, because I did not want Tino, the Dyak boy, to see that gem, but Millard would not let me hide it. He was mad with fever, yet he would not be soothed unless that stone was in his hands.

"Tino saw it. *Ja*, he did. He had to go in and out of that bungalow, and his eyes were sharp—very sharp. Each time he would pass through, he would look at Millard's bed where that fool was playing with the great ruby that shot red flashes of light from its bosom that was redder than anything I have ever seen. Once it held Tino spellbound so that he stood on one leg like a blue crane, staring at the thing, and I had to give him a blow on the side of the head to make



"That violin wailed like a woman in agony, and I sprang on Legus then."

him wake up. Never have I seen a stone like it, and never will I see one like it again. When one looked into it—into the red heart of it, one was stirred in a way that I cannot explain. All the longing that had ever come to every ancestor of mine seemed to creep into my finger-tips and make me want to stretch them out for that stone. It is not right for the *lieber Gott* to make such things as that. I am a naturalist, and I do not long for loot, but when I would stare at that stone, at the mystery that I felt was deep down in it, my mouth would get dry, and my fingers would have a curious tingling feeling as if they wanted to stroke it. I have seen big rubies—I have seen the big Mogok ruby in the collar of the golden goddess at the Wat Sutat at Bangkok, but it was nothing compared to the ruby which Millard fondled in his delirium. It was as small in comparison to that stone as my bungalow is to the palace of the Emperor Wilhelm at Potsdam. I saw it, Ford, and I know.

"Day after day I would sit and watch Millard. I could not let Tino watch him because there was a light in that Dyak's eyes that I did not like. He did not know the stories that were told about the Heart and the way it had to be won, but he would have thought nothing of sticking a knife into that delirious man and rushing off into the jungle with that jewel. So I had to watch Millard, and I cursed the three-headed god of bad luck for bringing that man and his ruby into my bungalow. *Ja*, I cursed the bad luck that had come to me. I had specimens to collect, but I could not collect them. I had to watch that fool, and every day that I stared at that stone the fascination that it had for me became greater. I wanted it, Ford, wanted it for myself; and then, one day when that desire became so strong that I could hardly fight against it, the light of consciousness came into Millard's eyes, and he looked up at me.

"Who are you?" he whispered.

"I am Hermann Hochdorf, a naturalist," I answered.

"How long have I been here?" he asked.

"Three weeks," I said.

"He looked at me and then at the

great big ruby in his hand. 'And I have talked?' he murmured.

"*Ja*, you have talked," I said. "You have talked a lot!"

"Once again he looked at me and then at the stone, and then he laughed a sneering laugh. 'You are an honest man,' he said.

"I am a naturalist," I growled, mad at myself because that big stone had found every little bit of desire that was in my system. 'I collect animals and things like that.'

"But you know what this is?" he said, thrusting the ruby into the sunbeams so that it flashed like the big red light that warns the ships off Shaga Rock.

"It is the Heart of Harno Shan," I said, shutting my eyes to the light that came from that big stone.

"And you know the stories?" he said.

"I know the stories," I snapped. "I know everything about it."

"You have heard that it must be won with blood?" he asked, with that cursed sneering look in his eyes.

"So they say," I growled.

"HE held the ruby in his two hands, and he looked at me, and I looked at him. I did not like that man. I did not like his face from the first night that I carried him into my bungalow. He had a face that reminded me of the face of Piet Schiebel, whom we shot at Froeschweiler because he sold plans of the fortifications to the French. But what was I to do? If you drag a man from the river it is right that you should look after him until he is able to walk.

"After a little while he slept, and when he woke up after a long sleep he spoke to me again.

"As you know that the Heart must be won with blood, it is useless for me to try and tell you that some one gave it to me," he grinned. "Is it not so, Mr. Hochdorf?"

"That is your business," I said to him.

"But you would hardly believe that I got it by peaceful means," he cried, "so I am not going to tell you that I did. I am going to tell you the truth. I killed a man to get possession of it."

"Who was the man?" I asked, pre-

tending to be little interested in that business.

"'Captain Victor Legus,' he answered. 'I gave a little whistle of surprise when he said that. I knew Captain Victor Legus. I knew him, and I knew his wife. He was a devil if ever there was one in this East. He was known everywhere. He was a gambler, a smuggler, and a dare-devil of the worst kind. And he was the best shot with a rifle or revolver that I have ever heard of. *Ja*, he was so. He was a wonderful man with a gun. Once in a row at Saigon I saw Captain Victor Legus do some things with a revolver that I would not have believed a man could do. And his wife was nearly as good a shot as he was.'

"'But how did you manage to get Legus off his guard?' I asked. 'He is generally a wide-awake customer.'

"'Sit down; I will tell you,' said Millard. 'Sit down here on the side of the bed.'

"'And just because I had a mad desire to hear how he had won that great gem I sat down beside him.'

"'Legus had killed a Dutch trader at Saigon to get the Heart,' said Millard. 'and I had followed him to Hue. I followed him and watched him. Hochdorf. For two weeks I did not let him go out of my sight. Each night I would creep into the garden of his bungalow and watch through chinks in the curtains. Twice I saw him with the Heart in his hand. Twice I saw him holding it so that his wife could admire it, and it drove me crazy. Look at it. Hochdorf! Look at it now, and see if it is not enough to drive a man mad! Look at it, I tell you!'

"'I do not want to look at it,' I cried. 'I do not!'

"'He tried to thrust that stone in front of my face, and I shut my eyes to it. I shut my eyes to it, my friend. I was afraid of myself. I was afraid that the desire in the ends of my fingers might tempt me to stretch out my right hand and squeeze the throat of that murderer. I am big enough to tell you how it affected me. *Gott sei dank!* I managed to fight that temptation while he was delirious. The red light in the heart of that stone made it impossible for me to think

of anything but that great blazing jewel which had created a ferment in the mind of every adventurer on the coast.

"'You are afraid to look at it!' cried Millard. 'You are afraid to put your eyes upon it! Is it not so?'

"'Ja. I do not want to look at it,' I snapped. 'I do not want to get in the way of temptation.'

"'Then you cannot blame me!' he cried. 'You cannot blame me, Hochdorf, because I put a knife into Legus. Listen: I will tell you of the night that I took the Heart from him. It was moonlight, and he was sitting on the porch listening to his wife playing a violin. She was inside the house, and the music came to him through the open doors. He loved music, and she was playing something that night that got into his veins and made him forget everything. I think while he listened he forgot that he had the Heart of Harno Shan in his possession.'

"DID you ever hear the Tiger Song that the Laos witch-doctors play? Well, she was playing that song to him, Hochdorf, and she was the only white person that ever I have heard play it so that it gave one the same creepy chills that you get when the Laos wizards play it. Mother of God! she played like one of those Laos wizards! Legus and she had lived with the Laos people, and that music was in her fingers. Ay! ay! ay! it was in her fingers!

"'I was in the shadow at the end of the porch, and as I listened to that creepy music, I thought I could hear the tigers coming out of the hills and creeping down through the thorn bushes to the water. By the bones of Buddha, I heard them! It was in the music, Hochdorf. That instrument told everything. She made that violin imitate the soft sounds of their padded feet. You could hear the tigers' throaty coughs and snarls and the crackling of the bushes as they pushed their way through. It was wonderful music!

"'And it held Legus like a vise. He was leaning towards the door of the room in which she was sitting, and as I watched him, I knew that my chance had come. 'If she will only keep on

playing," I said to myself. "If she will only keep on playing that poison song, I shall get the Heart!"

"I fell on my hands and knees and started to crawl towards Legus. I was afraid that he would turn before I could get close enough to spring. I sweated blood, then, Hochdorf. I did! If that woman stopped playing that weird Tiger Song before I was near enough to spring on her husband, I knew that he would come to himself, turn like a flash, and put a bullet through me. I knew that much. But I knew that if she continued playing till I got close to him, the Heart of Harno Shan would be mine.

"I shall never forget that song, Hochdorf. I shall hear it if I live to be a hundred. It is in my brain, whirling round and round, day and night. It got into my system as I crawled towards him. The wild throb of it got into my blood, and I crept forward, keeping time with the mad rhythm of it, praying like a madman that she would not finish before I got within springing distance. Holy St. Agnes! how I prayed! There was no hope for me if she stopped playing—not the slightest hope.

"Fear gripped me, and I tried to turn when I was half-way, but that tiger music held me. I could not turn! That music dragged me on and on, although I was near crazed with terror. I moved to the infernal rhythm of it—moved with the hand of fear at my heart. And then—and then, Hochdorf, I—I heard that violin cry out like a woman as it told how the man-eater sprang upon the native woman at the well. It wailed like a woman in agony, and I sprang then. I sprang on Legus, who was sitting listening, listening like the silver statue of the Peri at Lenare."

"That was his story, my friend. That was the story he told me as to how he had got possession of the Heart of Harno Shan. I did not speak for a little while after he had finished it; then I put a question to him.

"And you got away?" I asked.

"Millard lifted himself upon his elbow and looked around with eyes of fear. He was nearly crazy with fear. He lifted himself up and peered out at the big trees that surrounded my little bun-

galow. He looked down across the clearing at the river, and he listened to the little noises that came out of the jungle.

"I got away by the skin of my teeth," he said in a whisper. "She is as big a devil as he was. She sent two bullets after me as I ran across the garden. I stumbled, and one of those bullets nicked a piece out of my ear. See! I carry her mark.

"I got down to Mong Pran, and she followed me. She was in my room one night when I came home at midnight, and she would have killed me if she had waited till I struck a light. But she was too excited. She blazed away at me, and I fell backwards down the stairs. It was lucky that I fell. If I had not stumbled I would never have escaped from the house.

"That night I went down to Pahtia. I thought I had flung her off my track, but I was wrong. One day I came face to face with her near the temple, and she blazed away at me as I dodged through the crowd of worshipers and dashed into a side alley. She had scared me badly. I did not stop running for hours. I fled down the coast and took a ship to Bau, and then I took a boat down the river. I was swamped, and just as I had given up all hope I caught sight of the light in your bungalow. She is a devil, Hochdorf, a bigger devil than Legus himself!"

"THAT man was crazy with fear. He was afraid of that woman who had played the Tiger Song on the night he had killed her husband. She had shaken his nerves. She had followed on his heels from Saigon to Mong Pran and from Mong Pran to Pahtia, and he thought that she was still pursuing him.

"Then another curious thing happened about that business. One morning I caught him sitting up in his bed listening as if he heard the crack of doom itself, and when I asked him what he was listening to, he gave a nervous jump and looked up at me with terror in his eyes.

"Himmel, what are you listening to?" I cried.

"He wet his dry lips and answered me. 'Hochdorf,' he muttered, 'last night



I heard her playing! I heard that woman playing! I did! I did, Hochdorf! I heard her playing that wild, mad Tiger Song she played that night I stole the Heart from her husband! In the night I heard her, man, in the night, do you understand?"

"You are crazy," I cried. "The business has turned your brain!"

"No, no, no!" he screamed. "I am not crazy! Last night I was awake, and the notes of her violin came up from the river. It was the same music, Hochdorf. I know! I know! It came from the river—do you hear? It was she! I heard her, man! She was playing the song that made me hear the creeping tigers, the song that made me sweat blood as I crawled along the veranda. Do you think

am mad? I heard it. I tell you! I heard it! It came from the river through the darkness, like green lariats of sound, Hochdorf, little green poison lariats that tried to drag me towards her!"

"I tried to reason with that fool but I could not. He thought he had heard the violin playing the Tiger Song, and it put the fear of God into his heart. Nothing that I could say would make him think differently. On that day he lay with his ears turned to the river listening for the sounds that had got into the back of his brain. Those sounds stopped him from thinking of anything

else. He was certain that he had heard the music through the night, the tiger music, and as the day passed, slowly his fear became greater.

"I did not like that man's face, but I was sorry for him. I was sorry for him because temptation had conquered him. Mind you, that Heart had tempted me. He was a lunatic, and as he kept telling me again and again of that weird music, I began to believe that he had really heard it in the night. I did. The way he would turn his head to the river and listen, made me listen, and when the night came down like a black camel-cloth he had my nerves on the jump. *Ja*, he had me nearly insane over that matter. He kept telling me that I would hear those sounds if I stayed awake and listened.

"I will not stay awake!" I growled. 'I am not a fool to lie awake at night and listen to the branches rubbing against each other when the sea breeze comes up the valley.'

"But it is she!" he cried. 'It is the wife of Legus coming after the Heart.'

"*Gott*, I was sick! I had never seen a man in such a state. Every time he would scream out that it was she, he would kiss that Heart of Harno Shan and fondle it as if he was afraid of it being stolen from him.

"I tried to keep awake that night, but

I was too tired. I tried to keep my eyes open on account of the story which he told me, but I was so tired that I fell asleep. *Ja*, I fell asleep, and it was after midnight when I was roused out of that sleep by a yell from Millard, a yell that startled me. I sprang up in my bunk and listened. I listened with my ears and my skin. Coming up from the river were the strains of the most infernal music that was ever made. Did you ever hear poisonous music? Well, that was poisonous music. It was the essence of poison made into sound. I sat up in the bed and listened, listened as I had never listened before.

"After a few minutes I managed to strike a light, and what do you think I saw then? Millard, who was too weak to walk, had climbed out of his bed, and he was crawling towards the door of the bungalow on his hands and knees!

"You fool!" I shouted, 'where are you going?'

"The music, Hochdorf," he cried. "The music is calling me!"

"You are mad!" I roared. 'You are out of your mind!'

"I sprang to the door and caught hold of that madman. He fought with me, but I carried him back to bed, and all the time I struggled with him, that music was drifting up from the river and coming into the bungalow.

"You stay here, and I will find out about the music!" I cried. 'You wait!'

"But Millard was nearly beside himself with fear just then. 'Don't leave me alone!' he screamed. 'Don't leave me alone, Hochdorf!'

"I could not tear myself away from him. I could not. He clung to me with his two hands. I tried to push him off, but he seemed to have a dozen hands. And all the time I struggled with him, that music that was creepy and terrible came to me through the window. He would not let me go away from him. He was a terror-stricken lunatic who chattered of the Legus woman and that Tiger Song till the dawn came up out of the East.

"**N**OW I am going to tell you of something strange. The next morning I crossed the river, crossed it by the rope



He hung to those ropes, forty feet above the water.

bridge which the Dyaks used, and on the other side I found something. What do you think I found? On the grass I picked up a woman's handkerchief, a little embroidered handkerchief with the letter 'L' worked in the corner!

"That discovery startled me. I sat down and tried to think. I tried to think of the music that I had heard. '*Himmel*,' I said to myself, 'it looks as if there was something in what he said.'"

"That discovery made me feel just a little bit sick. I had no love for Millard, but I did not want anybody sniping around that bungalow. I was sorry I was mixed up in that business.

"I did not tell Millard about finding the handkerchief. He was nearly mad as it was. But I said to myself that I would lie awake that night and slip down to the river bank when that music started.

"You know how I sleep? When my head touches the pillow I drop into a slumber that is a million miles deep. I always do. And when I got into my bed that night I was that tired that I could not stay awake. I wanted to, and I tried to, but—*Ach*! I could not!

"It was the music that awakened me. That mad, wild music came up from the river like it did on the night before. *Ja*! I sprang out of the bed and rushed over to where Millard was sleeping. I had a cold feeling on me then. Millard was not there. His bed was empty, and I did not have to think long as to where he had gone. A great fear was upon me—a big fear, my friend. I never remember to have felt such a curious sensation of dread as I felt just then. Never.

"It was a moonlight night. A great big moon was hanging low in the East, and I ran across the clearing towards the river. I ran like a crazy man. And I saw no trace of Millard as I ran. I cried out at the top of my voice, but I got no answer. The music had stopped, and there was a silence upon that place, a great silence that was suddenly shattered by a rifle shot that came from the other side of the river!

"I told you about the rope bridge over which I had crossed that morning. That rope bridge was outlined against the moon, just a network of plaited ropes that looked curious against that big white

moon. And as I ran across the clearing, I looked at that bridge. I gave a yell of astonishment as I looked. Millard was climbing across it! He was climbing across the bridge to the far side of the river. He was crawling across the ropes on his hands and knees!

"Once again that rifle rang out, and I saw Millard fall on his face. I could see him plainly, a black figure silhouetted against the big silver moon. He stopped, made an effort to go forward, and then lurched sideways and fell from the little eighteen-inch pathway on which he was crawling!

"I held my breath as I saw him fall. I held my breath because I thought he would drop into the river. But Millard made a big effort to save himself—*ja*, a big effort. As he rolled from that bridge he clutched two ropes that made the hand-guides along one side, and he hung to those ropes, swinging about forty feet above the water.

"As I raced across the clearing I saw him swinging like a big pendulum across the face of the moon. It gave me a feeling like you had a moment ago when you battered that snake. I was sick in the stomach. I did not like Millard, but I did not like to see a man swinging on a rope in the air, for somebody that I could not see, to shoot at. I cursed the Heart of Harno Shan at that moment. I had been tempted, and I knew what a devil of a fascination it had for people such as Millard who could not fight the temptation.

"That rifle spoke again. One of those two ropes that Millard was hanging onto was cut as if by an invisible knife, and Millard gave a scream of terror. And I screamed too. I screamed at whoever it was in the mangrove trees on the other bank that was firing at him. But my yell and Millard's yell had no effect. There were two shots in quick succession. One cut the second rope, and the other—well, the other struck Millard as he fell. I found where that second shot had struck when I discovered Millard's body next day.

"*Ja*, we found his body. We found it half a mile down the river at dawn. It had drifted onto a sand-bank. The current was swift in that stream.

"You are wondering if the Heart of Harno Shan was in his money-belt, are you not? Well, it was not there. That big ruby that had murders by the score to its credit had been taken from him. Some one had opened Millard's money-belt and taken it before I found him on the sand-bank!"

HOCHDORF stopped speaking to stare at a curiously spotted lizard that crept out of a crack in the baked mud. The strange markings on the reptile made him forget the Heart of Harno Shan for a moment, and Ford put a question to relieve his curiosity.

"So the woman got it after all?" said the American. "Well, the old belief that it had to be won with blood was true in that particular case."

"I thought so on that morning," said Hochdorf, as the lizard slipped back into its hole. "I thought so then, but I changed my mind ten days afterwards. Tino, the Dyak boy, came back from the coast just ten days after Millard's death. He had sneaked away from me that morning, and when he came back he had about twenty pounds of tobacco and enough beads to make every native girl in the *kampung* fall in love with him. I got a shock when I saw the store of things that Tino had. You bet I did. I grabbed him by the shoulders, and I shook him till his teeth chattered.

"Where did you get those?" I shouted, pointing to the tobacco and the beads.

"The bloodstone, *Tuan*," he cried. "I took it and sold it down the river."

"My fingers burrowed into that Dyak's shoulder until he squealed. 'And the music?' I cried. 'The music? Who made the music on that night?'"

"I made it, *Tuan*," he screamed. "I made it! I heard him tell you how the music dragged him to the river, and I knew that the white woman was waiting. I had seen her waiting in the bushes, and I thought if she killed him I might get the bloodstone. When he fell from the rope bridge I swam after him and took it from him. She found him before you did, master, but I had it then!"

The big American dragged his eyes away from the group of natives still clustered around the dead snake. "And the Heart?" he asked quietly. "Did you ever hear anything of it?"

"Tino had sold it to a Chinaman," answered Hochdorf, "and that Chinaman disappeared the day after he bought it. Since then I have not heard a word about it, but I am willing to bet that it is still making men busy with knife and gun in some part of this old moss-grown and belief-ridden East."

The naturalist got slowly upon his feet, placed his big topce upon his head, and signaled to the grizzled leader of the native porters. As the porters picked up their bundles he spoke to Ford. "I think it is high time for us to be moving," he said. "We will have to push along to reach the bungalow before night falls."



The Riches of the Earth

By Edwin Balmer

Author of "The Wild Goose Chase," etc.

A story so true that every reader can find its counterpart among his own acquaintances; the tragedy of a woman fighting off the greatest of all longings.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

COREY'S APARTMENTS—four rooms each, eighteen apartments in the building—were built to be the "Honey-moon Flats" of Springfield. For ten years they had hastened the affianced of the town to the altar by the delightful adequacy of their accommodations—temporary, for the first year.

For most of those who moved in, the apartments proved only temporary abodes; these, having moved into the little houses further out, passed Corey's now with only delightful recollection of their first year. But for others who came when Corey's was new, the flats had become the accepted home. Slowly, gradually, as rent days came and went, the hope of being able to leave Corey's sank to anxiety over ability to stay; new leases, when they were signed by these, no longer dared demand redecorating and refittings upon the scale granted those tenants whose checks were certain to be found at the agent's office on the first of every month. So one wing of Corey's became known as "the permanent wing."

In the single bedroom of the apartment on the third floor of this wing, the wife woke early one November morning with a guilty sense that her husband had been up and dressing for many moments before she stirred. She sat up, shivering, and pulled the coverlet about her, for the room had the stagnant, penetrating cold of an early winter morning when the

window has only just been closed and the steam heat is only beginning to hammer in the radiator.

Though she knew it must be almost seven o'clock, it was so dark in the bathroom that her husband was shaving by the electric light.

From the kitchen, which was directly opposite their bedroom, came the acrid odor of gas burning too high under a kettle.

"Ralph!" she called to her husband, guiltily.

He put down his razor and turned about, wiping the soap from his face.

"Dearie, I woke before the alarm went off, so I stopped it. I wanted you to sleep awhile longer."

"Why?" she asked.

"To-day is the day the Fanston order is placed, dearie," he said, with a softening of his voice.

"Yes," she replied, aware of the same awe in her own word.

"You can't do anything at the office before it's time to see Fanston. You'd better get all the rest here you can."

"Yes," she agreed, and lay down, trying not to think of the Fanston order.

She succeeded in staying quiet until Ralph finished shaving, but when he went into the kitchen she put on kimono and slippers and went into the tiny pine-stained-for-oak dining room and laid a place for him at the table before he finished fishing his very hard boiled eggs from the kettle.

When they sat down: "That blue tie looks well with that suit, dear. . . . Isn't the air sharp and cold this morning?" She made an attempt to keep off the one subject on both their minds; but her hand, reaching over the table toward his, clenched unconsciously. He grasped it, and lifting it, kissed it until it relaxed. Then, seeing the tears which came to her eyes, he arose and pulled her up against him, holding her tight.

"Why, Edith wife!" He stroked her forehead and hair. "There's other business besides Fanston's to get."

"Yes, of course. I know it!" She kissed him almost violently.

"Besides, we've a good chance at Fanston, anyway. Their lawsuit with Yarrow isn't going to hold them back on their printing. They're going right ahead with the catalogue, and if we don't get it, we'll get something else big soon, surely."

"Yes, yes, of course. I was foolish!"

She ran for his overcoat, helped him into it. Then she was alone.

Surely there was, as he had said, some other big order which they might get if they lost the Fanston business. There was always another big order just ahead; there always had been one.

Fourteen years before—when she was twenty and just home from the State University, and he was two years older and had been at work one year, and had just bought the big printing presses—they had announced their engagement on the certain prospect of a big order which was about to come.

There was no reason why it never came. Any one of half a dozen firms in Springfield besides Fanston's regularly used enough catalogues, folders and other fine printed matter to pay Ralph a fair profit if he could get the entire order for the year. But the best and most profitable part of the big, steady orders still went to the city sixty miles away.

Ralph got only the "rush," irregular orders or, when he desperately made a price to get big business, it was at a sacrifice which brought him no profit—too often actually a loss—and which brought no further orders except at the same cut.

So for six endless years they waited, apart, the always impending "landing" of the sort of order which would permit their having a home. Then they married, to await the order together, taking a flat at Corey's—"temporarily," as she took the position of bookkeeper in the printing office to help out "temporarily."

Could she ever leave?

The question for her was not merely could they ever afford to leave Corey's; could she even leave the office now? With the bitter invasiveness of the accountant, she knew they were running so close that if it were now necessary to



"Yes, it's so—so, Ralph! He gave it to me himself. It's signed. It's his order! Don't you see?" She was unsteady now, trembling terribly.

pay some one for doing the work she did, even these rooms at Corey's might be impossible.

There was no particular reason why these thoughts should torture her more that morning than usual—none, except that her thirty-fifth birthday was staring her in the face. The chance of a big order like the one to be placed this morning was always tantalizing them. Yet, as she returned to her room, she knew she had endured the putting off of a home beyond the next order as long as she could. She must give up the office after this day—this morning—or be happy and satisfied with it as her life, now and for all.

The sight of herself in the glass filled her with rebellion. She saw herself a woman still in her very prime for what God created such women as she—beautiful, strong, full-bosomed, and with blood tingling now even at the instant's daring thought of giving life! It was entirely wrong, impossible, that life could be granted or forbidden by the gaining or losing of an order for a lot of furniture catalogues. It was utterly beyond reason that the moving of one big press for two extra days each week or its remaining idle could change the whole present and future for herself and Ralph, and for—

But she dared think of it no more, definitely. The color-picture chromos of chairs and tables and cabinets and close-printed pages describing them were the very elements and basis of life. They must have orders for them, she and Ralph, to live at all. To get the order she must go at once to Fanston's office, and, while pretending that the business would not make much difference with them and that they would rather not have it than to take it at the price they had made before, she must fight—fight and scheme and contrive, dissembling and pretending and putting up a brave face, while all the time her heart would be choking her and her hands cold and her whole soul shaking in fear of losing the order at any figure.

The combat between her and Fanston would start where it had always started with him and Ralph, or with him and her. It would open with her

trying to get the business at the price they bid,—only a fair price, perhaps scarcely that, but one which would free her from the office for a while, at least. Then slowly her opponent would fight her down, ten dollars here, twenty-five there, bringing up bids of other printers willing to work for only a living. And she would see freedom slipping, slipping away from her with every lowering of the price, until finally it would be brought down to a cost of bare paper and press work, and she would have to take it and slink out with it, if they were to keep the shop open at all. And so it must be with the Marley order the next month, the Harris order after that and the rest around the year, as it had always been.

The sharp, querulous rasp of a woman's voice breaking in upon the rough tones of a man's came up through the thin flooring from the Warner's flat below.

As Edith ate her breakfast at the kitchen table, she heard the Warners continue their wrangling. They seemed to deserve their lot—or, at least, the wife deserved no better. Throughout the ten years she had been married, Mrs. Warner had only idled and wasted. Edith told herself that if she had made no effort, she would not feel bitter, she would not complain. The hard part was that she, as well as Ralph, was spending all her strength, and they were winning nothing.

She got on the street-car to go to Fanston's. A woman, who had been a girl with her and had married only a little earlier than she, was on the car with her two boys and the baby, a girl. The older boy, a handsome little fellow of seven, got up and greeted Edith bashfully; the other boy, just four, clung to her hand with his warm, damp fingers; his mother, meaning only to be friendly, gave Edith the little girl to hold for a moment.

After they had left the car, Edith sat with gloved hands clenched, her lips set, the color gone from her cheeks except for the patch in each where the blood burned hotly. That girl deserved to have children no more than she! Only—*her* husband was succeeding.

Edith cried inwardly that she thought no disloyalty to Ralph. She was complaining of conditions which kept him and her where they were—conditions for which the stinginess of Fanston, whose factory now loomed ahead, seemed the chief cause. As she pictured herself approaching Fanston in his office, she despised him, loathed him—and the next moment trembled for fear he would not give her the order even at the price at which she had had it before. Was there no way to get this year's business at a fair profit?

What was that?

Her eyes absently had been gazing at the typewritten page in the hands of the man beside her. She had read a few lines mechanically, but the words had not registered in her mind. Perhaps they would have had no meaning for her had not the man, suddenly conscious that he had exposed the paper, concealed it with a start and turned and stared at her in alarm. He did not recognize her, and she gave no sign that she had realized anything of significance. He settled back, reassured. Then she knew him as Hastings, the attorney for the Yarrows in their lawsuit against Fanston. And suddenly she realized the tremendous significance of the lines she had read and knew their overwhelming importance to Fanston.

"Fanston's Works!" the conductor called. She jumped up mechanically and bolted for the general offices.

Three-quarters of an hour later she emerged and stood on the street corner gazing up the track at a car going toward town. Constantly, unconsciously, her fingers clasped and unclasped the fastening of her wrist-bag and felt inside it to touch a folded page of paper.

As no car was in sight, she started toward a drug store opposite, where the blue sign proclaimed a public telephone, but checked the impulse and, turning toward town, she set off on foot rapidly. She seemed to see no one whom she passed on the street, though many stared at her; for at times she broke into a run.

A car going in her direction caught up with her, but as if she now needed the physical outlet of effort, she did not try to hail it, but hurried on.

"Ralph!" she panted, as she ran into the office of their shop. "Ralph!"

Her husband came, all ink from the press-room.

"We got it! We got it! Ralph! Ralph, he gave it to us!"

She thrust the precious paper from her wrist-bag upon him. "See! See! We got it!"

"Edith, at our price? Fanston! Edith!"

"Yes, it's so—so, Ralph! He gave it to me himself. It's signed. It's his *order*! Don't you see?" She was unsteady now, trembling terribly.

He caught her in his arms. "I see!" he cried, and reckless of the smudge of ink upon him, she pressed to him and made him hold her.

"Kiss me! Kiss me!" she cried. "Now hold me again, *hard*!"

"But Edith, I can't believe it. I can't see how you got it." He struggled with himself to realize it after she had relaxed a little from him.

"Why? Isn't it what we had a right to expect? Isn't the price only fair?"

"Only fair. But I can't believe it. Think what it means, Edith. You don't have to stay here. You can go home now. Now!"

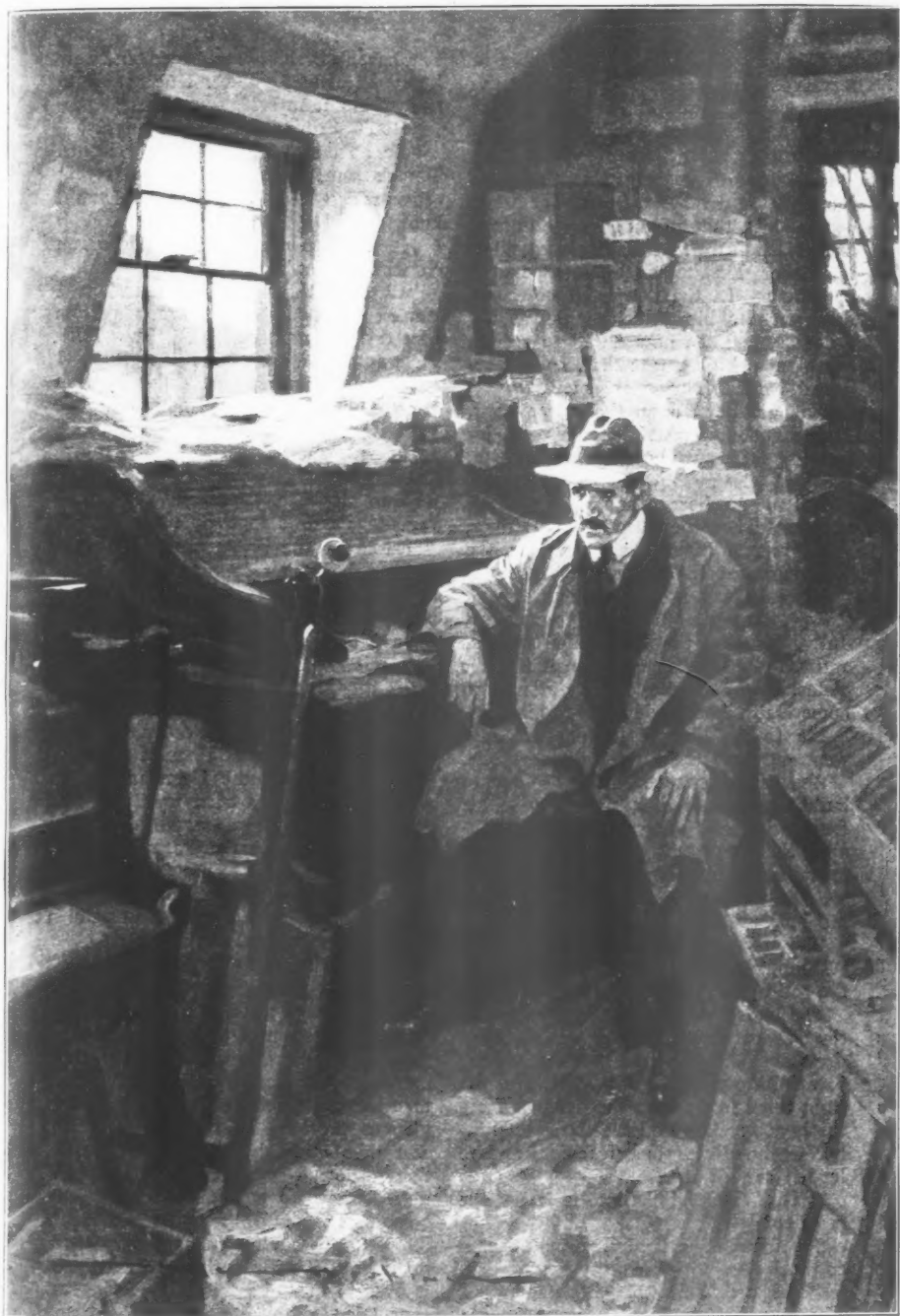
She closed her eyes. "Yes, now. I can go home now."

"Do!" he commanded her. He took from her the order and almost in awe put it safely away. "I've got to stay here now, but you can go home and rest. I will try not to think too much of it until I am through here. I must work. But you go now, wont you?"

"Yes, I will," she acceded in the same awe, kissed him only once more and turned about and went out.

HE watched her until she was out of sight. For a few minutes more he delayed, to be alone in his office, though the press upon which he had been working was awaiting his attention. It was impossible for him to put the meaning of the order away from his mind, but he tried to think only of what it meant to them in business.

For it promised more than merely profit for the year. It insured to him the advantage which he had not had since



The cancelation was short, sharp, without appeal. Ralph hung up the receiver and sat dully, dazed, as the light failed without and the office darkened.

he bought his presses, of being able to refuse other business except upon a decently paying basis. It gave him power to end his reputation as a man who had to take work at any figure.

Soon he had to return to the press room. As he was alone except for a boy press-feeder that morning, he absorbed himself as fully as possible in mechanical labor. He ate lunch hastily in the press-room. In the afternoon other orders came to him which, with the big order secured, he now dared to refuse, except at a higher rate than he had received before. They were small orders, but he got them upon the better basis. He had not expected the Fanston order to change circumstances for him so soon. He was closing up at half-past five, about to go home, happy, confident, exultant, when the telephone bell rang, and Fanston himself speaking on the wire canceled his order. The cancellation was short, sharp, without appeal. Ralph hung up the receiver and sat dully, dazed, as the light failed without and the office darkened. Then it was six o'clock and he knew if he did not go home Edith would telephone to him.

He forced himself to his feet, and went out into the lamp-lighted streets.

As he approached Corey's square building, he looked up fearfully to his front windows. They were dark. Probably she was resting from her excitement. Perhaps she was asleep. He hoped so. He went up quietly and unlocked his door.

She was not in the living room. "Ralph," he heard her voice softly from the bed-room, and he had to go in to her.

She had been kneeling in the dark at the side of their bed. She was in house dress and slippers, with her thick, dark hair falling over her shoulders. Enough light came in through the window from the high arc lamp on the street to show her in the silhouette before him and to let her see his face.

"Why, Ralph! What is it?" she cried softly.

He drew back from her, not daring to touch her.

"The order, Edith," he stammered, "Fanston's order—"

"Oh!" she followed him. "I know.

You haven't been able to understand how I got the order; I haven't been able to understand it myself, sometimes."

"Don't, Edith!" he begged weakly.

"Yes; I must! I have to tell you now. There's some special things about that order which I must tell you so you'll know how I got it."

He tried to check her; but she ran on without heeding.

"Listen, Ralph: You remember I started out straight to Fanston's from here late this morning. Well, Lucy Hillier was on the car with her children. I got on and sat next to her and—oh, what am I saying? That had nothing to do with it; no, I mean it had everything. I guess; but not directly. What I meant to tell you was, there was a man sitting next to me—Mr. Hastings—the lawyer for the Yarrows in their claim against Fanston for the rights of the Eastman patents. I didn't recognize him at first; of course he didn't know me. He was reading some legal papers. I just glanced toward them, as one does, and read a line or two—quite by accident. I didn't think anything at all about it until all of a sudden he turned on me, and then, in a flash, I knew what I'd discovered. It was the date and conditions of the original papers about the Eastman patents which Fanston has been trying to find out and which mean everything to him in his lawsuit with the Yarrows.

"I never thought to use that information then. I was ashamed of myself for reading what I had. I knew it was stolen information; it wasn't mine to use."

He came nearer. "And you used it?"

"Wait. It was right before we got to the works I read that paper. I got in to see Fanston at once. He started at me cruelly—more cruelly than ever, this morning—you know how he is! He tried to make me think at first he meant to give us the business at a decent price, and then—he began fighting me down—down—in exactly the old way, until I knew it would drive us to the old scraping for any profit at all from it.

"He made his last cut from our figure and signed it with his initials and tossed it over to me—the lowest price he had ever tried to make us take. I got my nerve up and threw it back.



"I knew then I had sold some one else's secret to get that order. But I didn't care! All I could think of was that I had the order and wouldn't have to be at the office any more and could think of children."

"I can't take it," I said.

"That's all I can pay you," he said.

"If you knew what was the exact date and the conditions of the original agreement between Eastman and the Yarrows," I said, "do you suppose you might be able to pay a little more for your printing?"

"He was at me like a flash. 'What do you mean?' he said. 'Do you know that?'"

"Yes," I faced him back. "I do." And then I told him.

"He proved up on it, of course. He kept me there while he telephoned, sent for people, went out and came back. Then—'Well,' he said, with his nasty, mean smile, 'you came through; I'll come through now. What's your figure?'"

"I handed him back our bid, the original one we had made out. He signed it. I ran from his office almost singing—singing. You saw how I came into the shop. I knew that I had sold some one else's secret to get that order. But I didn't care. All I could think of was that I had the order and wouldn't have to be at the office any more and could think of children. But of course I know now we can't take his order. It wasn't got honestly. Oh, Ralph, I didn't see how I could tell you; I knew what it meant to you too."

He put his arm about her compassionately. "My dear, dear little wife, I knew it already. You didn't have to tell me that. I knew it."

"That I got the order dishonestly?"

"No, dear; not that, of course. But I knew we didn't really have the order. Fanston canceled it this afternoon."

"Fanston canceled! What did he say?"

"Nothing—just canceled, that's all. I suppose after he'd learned what you knew, he thought better of his—generosity. He's going to send his business to the city or else, if we get an order from him, it'll be at the same price as before. So we're just about where we were this morning, dear; that's all."

Her eyes gazed into his. "No; we're not back there, Ralph! We can never be back there again. I got that order dishonestly; he's canceled it. But what do we care? What difference can that make to

us now? Hasn't this given me—hasn't it given you—us a day, or half a day at least, in which we've let ourselves know what it means to live—to have babies come? Think! All this afternoon here alone I let myself dare to listen and hear little voices—little voices—and to feel little fingers—a small, warm body, and then later, the sound of little feet! I've had that this afternoon; so we can never go back—we can never go back where we were this morning!"

She seized her husband and clung to him closely.

"Yes," he cried to her as he felt the beat of her heart against his. "This afternoon's changed everything for me too—it's changed everything."

"So what do we care if this is going to be our home? What do we care if we can't keep even these rooms, if we have to live in two, in one? What do we care, now that we know?"

"We won't have to, Edith! We'll get along better, even in the business, for this afternoon. All I needed was not to be afraid. I've got some good straight business that won't cancel, at a better price already. I'll get some more, for I'd got into a rut trying to work with you too long in a way a man and his wife were never meant to help each other for very long. I was depending on you in the wrong way. I'm going to work for you now! For you—and I'll really do things. I feel it! I know it!"

And for a long time he held her with her head upon his shoulder, neither of them speaking. At last, when she got up and turned on the light, she stared around strangely and in surprise at the plain, cramped little room in which they had lived for eight years; and as he saw her eyes, he saw the room in the sudden, strange new way too, and he steadied her as she trembled.

"Why, everything is the same," she said. "Nothing's changed here; nothing need be changed. We can live right on here if we must—right here in this same cheap old room. But how different it is now, my husband, how different! Why, all the riches of the earth are within it—all the riches of the earth!"



The Dub Reporter

By Maximilian Foster

Author of "The Whistling Man."

HOW often have you thought, as you read the glaring account in a newspaper of the evil deed or misfortune of some poor devil, "I wonder if the owner of the paper would have printed that if it had been about a member of his own family?" This story answers your question—answers it with the power of one of the best writers in the United States.

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DÉRÈMEAUX

IN HIS Junior year at college his classmates, elected Filson associate editor of their college weekly, the *Clio Palladium*; and after that Filson no longer struggled with fate. His life's work was cut out for him.

Consequently, without further waste

of his time, he flung up the semi-commercial course that had been mapped out for him by his father, and began to go in heavily for the "specials"—political economy, modern history, constitutional law and so forth. Then, in the order of events, Filson was graduated; and his thesis on the occasion was said

by the local editor to have been a masterly, original effort. It was entitled "The Liberty of the Press," and in it Filson alluded several times to the daily newspaper as "the people's forum." There were also references to "molding public opinion," "*vex populi*" and the like.

The same night, Filson boarded a train for New York....

FOR weeks, during the summer's usual stagnation, there had been little news worth printing in New York; and lacking news, the Morning *News*' advertising had declined hand-in-hand with its circulation. Then, as if just to tantalize, there had come drifting in at this juncture, a tip, a rumor, that had set everyone that heard it straightway on the jump.

The story, as it was later developed, is one that the *News*' men are never likely to forget. It was the Torrance scandal, a matter that threatened the downfall of a New York family long prominent and respected; and as a story, it was one of the biggest "exclusives" ever landed by a "yellow." A fortnight had passed since the *News* had bought the tip, but so far, the *News* had yet to land the story.

Nor was this the only reason why the *News*' city editor seemed the boor, the bully—that is, seemed unusually so. In train with the fall in ad's and circulation, the usual consequences had resulted. Mr. Saul, the proprietor, had complained. "Really, unless something is done," he protested, "I shall discharge some one." It was his sovereign remedy for all the ills of the *News*. "Really, I shall!" Consequently, there had been conferences.

This morning the conference had become critical. Flanked on one side by the business manager, on the other by the head of the circulation department, Robbins, the city editor, had uttered excuses. They had not been accepted. "If as you say, there aint any news," said the business manager, Mr. Morris, "w'y don't you get out 'nd make some?" Here he pushed back the silk hat he wore; and leaning over with both thumbs thrust into his arm-pits he favored Robbins with a leer. "Say, what're you here for, anyway?" he asked.

Ordinarily, when the business office had a "kick coming," it carried it first to the managing editor. At the moment, however, this functionary sat plunged in moody silence, the fact being that Mr. Saul, the owner, had only just finished chiding him much as Mr. Morris was now chiding the city editor.... "And yes!" the head of the circulation department at this point chimed in, "here's the Mawnin' *Sphere*,"—he called it the *Spear*, of course,—"out on the street with a double colyum front-page scoop on us—all the swell stuff about that dog-fight among them Newport high-tones! W'y, it's enough to make a man sick!" he averred; and Robbins winced, the pill being especially bitter, inasmuch as the *Sphere* was the *News*' most distinguished competitor.... "Well?" inquired the circulation gentleman, "aint you got anything to say?"

"Shut up, Barney," said the business manager; and when, grumbling a little, the head of the circulation department had done so, Mr. Morris again turned to Robbins. "Mr. Saul was on the 'phone a while ago. He says he's quite disappointed, the way you've let your men lay down on the Torrance story!"

Saul disappointed? It made Robbins start. He began to fathom now that not all the "kick" came from the business office. But why, after all, had Saul evinced so keenly personal an interest in the Torrance tip? Once, as Robbins recalled, orders had come down to the *News* office to play up in the society news every Torrance entertainment. Then, some months later, the order had suddenly been rescinded.

Feverishly Robbins wet his lips.

"That tip was a fake, Mr. Morris," he said, hurriedly, his face anxious and appealing. "I've had a dozen of the best men out on it, and there's nothing to the story. If Mr. Saul wishes the *News* to get Torrance we'll have to turn up something else, Mr. Morris."

"What's that?" the business manager demanded sharply. He was a tall, fat man with a salient jaw, a heavy dewlap and thick, flabby chops. There were puffs under his small, active eyes. "Who said anything about Mr. Saul wishing to get anyone?"

"But he does, don't he?" asked Robbins dully; and at the query the three others stirred uneasily. The fact is, like others engage in the *News'* branch of journalism, the personal largely. Mr. Saul was curiously sensitive—that is, sensitive about himself. Even to question him, trod close to treason, and Mr. Morris abruptly arose. "You never mind about Mr. Saul!" he warned, his voice deliberate. Then as deliberately he added: "When the *News* gives you orders you'd best fill them—that's all I've got to say! . . . Savvy?" he concluded.

Unquestionably, Robbins did. In his career he had himself "fired" many men, so many, in fact, that the act had become a mere reality, a commonplace shorn of any drama that fiction might give it; yet to find himself in this peril was different. The boot was on the other foot now; and somehow, for the first time he felt, if vaguely, the grotesqueness of the loyalty he was wont to drum into every "cub,"—the farcical *esprit de corps* that made them, the *News'* older men as well, do things for the *News* that Saul, its owner, would have been the first to shrink from doing—doing personally, of course.

But that was not the point. Like these dupes, these dubs and dummies that toiled and moiled for a pittance, demeaning themselves at every turn just to swell Saul's already swollen income, was he himself, Robbins, to be cast aside like an orange sucked dry? Was he?

As the *News'* city editor went back to his desk in the "city room," his face had taken on a new expression. One would have hazarded the guess that for once in his career he had been shamed.

"Where's Olney?" he snapped. Olney was the *News'* star reporter, the best of its well-known "gumshoe brigade;" and at Robbins' tone, his assistant looked up, startled. Olney, he said, had been out all night on a story. It was probably only a plain suicide; still, if it were properly worked up the *News* might run it a day or so as a murder mystery. "You call off Olney, d'y'e hear!" ordered Robbins. "Phone him to report at once! I want him and all the rest of the men you c'n spare put on that Torrance tip!"

"That?" echoed his assistant. "Why,

I thought we'd given that up as no use?"

Robbins did not even deign to answer. If he meant to make good, to show Saul and the others how cruelly they'd misjudged him, it was no time for conversation. He must *get* Torrance, *get* him somehow, in any way he could. And primed with this reflection, the *News'* city editor drew up his chair to his desk, where as alert, as feverishly active as a spider, he settled down to the day's engrossing routine.

The morning's "dope" lay before him,—the marked clippings, the penciled "suggestions," the telegrams, the tipsters' notes, the usual batch of letters, many anonymous, not a few malicious—these, as well as others of the many sources, devious and otherwise, through which the *News* got no small part of its "news;" and Robbins buried himself in the mass. It promised little, however. In it were only the tips to a few impending divorces, all on the West Side, too—hardly worth featuring; besides, one murder (a tenement case); three suicides, none important; an elopement, cheap and in Flatbush, also; and finally, the arrest in Newport of what the *News'* correspondent wired was a well-known "society lady."

Robbins, when he came to this, revived, but it was only momentarily. The "society lady" proved to have been arrested not for something scandalous but only for violating a speed ordinance in her motor; and disgustedly, Robbins tossed the telegram from him. A moment's rage burdened the *News'* city editor. He had been accused of "laying down on the job," and his pride hurt to the quick. Afterwards, he looked up; and his eye lowering over the "city room," halted presently on a distant figure.

Then ominously it lighted.

"Hey, you!" called Robbins, his air grim. "Filson!"

It was he indeed—Filson, a reporter for the *News*, however much one may marvel at the fact; and as his name was called, Filson leaped up, starting as if at a shot. He had been dreaming, his wits wool-gathering in fields far distant from this; and disentangling himself from his chair, awkwardly he hurried. "Yes, sir!" briskly responded Filson. "Coming, sir!"

—and picking up his notebook and pencil, he hastened along the aisle.

"Look a' here, you!" began Robbins, once Filson was in range. "How about that robb'ry I sent you out on?—the one in the Annette flats? The night desk left word you'd fell down on it!" And at the query, Filson's eyes rounded suddenly with astonishment.

"Why, no, sir!" he returned. "There wasn't anything in the story! The jewels were found—they'd been misplaced in a trunk, you know; and besides, the lady said she didn't wish for any publicity."

Robbins hardly waited until he had finished.

"Oh, didn't she?" he mocked. "She didn't wish for any publicity, did she?" he mimicked; and then his lip turned up at the corner till his teeth showed. "Who the deuce cares what she wished?" he demanded; and Filson gave a start. "When the *News* sends you out to get a story, I'll decide if we'll print it—not the people that's mixed up in it! Yeah! D'ye get me now?"

Yes, Filson got him. The sweat had sprung suddenly to his brow, while one might have noted, too, that his lips, as if dry, kept feverishly wetting themselves. But then, there was ample reason for this.

The fact is, in the brief moment he had stood there listening, scored heartily by Robbins, the gruff, the brusque, he had divined instinctively just what was about to happen.

The city editor was going to "fire" him.

There seemed no reason to doubt it. However, if the situation was all that Filson once had pictured it, with its cub reporter, its brutal city editor and all, somehow it failed now to thrill him as once he might have been thrilled. Frankly, in the weeks he'd worked on the *News* a change had come over Filson, especially in the spirit of his dream.

He had begun, for one thing, to wake up, the fact dawning on him that what he learned in the *News'* particular school of journalism was not at all the journalism he once had read about. Nor had he been able, try ever as hard as he could, to grasp the many differences.

Briefly, in so far as the *News* was con-

cerned, there seems no doubt that Filson had failed utterly to "catch on" in the newspaper game.

"D'ye know what I'm going to do?" asked Robbins, now quite himself again. "I'm a-going," he'd begun, when his assistant, hesitating, interrupted him. "It's Olney," said the assistant. "I've got him on your 'phone;" and grunting, Robbins snatched the receiver from the hook.

Filson waited, his lips as parched as the desert's dusty face. Already he tasted the shame, the ignominy of defeat, of being "fired" by the *News* for incompetence; and although this was exactly as it had happened in the Cub Reporter story, the reality held a bitterness he had not dreamed. But that is always the fact, the vast difference between romance and the actuality; and with a mind dulled to all else but its pain, he listened vaguely to Robbins' coarse, vulgar voice as the *News'* city editor talked over the wire to Olney, giving him his instructions.

His tone had altered. It was suave and propitiating now, for a man like Olney, second to none among the "rubber-soles," was of high value to the *News*. Not even Robbins could afford to offend him; and Filson, as he hearkened, was touched with envy. When would he, if ever, be received by Robbins with deference? He wondered.

"Y'understand, Olney, don't you?" queried Robbins. "Draw what cash you want; and you're to stick to Torrance till you get him.... What?... Yes, I guess I don't need tell you any more. It's Mr. Saul's own orders, and you'll know what that means! S'long, now!"

Then Robbins hung up the receiver and swung around in his chair. Filson still stood there, and the city editor shot him a sudden glance.

"Huh!" he growled. "What're you gaping at?"

Evidently his talk with Olney had mollified him, for when Filson reminded him "You were talking about my story, sir," Robbins grunted almost amiably.

"You listen, young feller," he grumbled. "I'm a-going to give you a tip. There's just two kinds of people in the world—the one kind that want to get their names in the paper, the other kind



"Say, what're you here for, anyway?" he asked.

that want to keep 'em out! The *News* aint interested in the first lot; they're nothing but a bunch of cheap grafters looking for a little free advertising! The other kind, though,—the ones dodging publicity,—they're our meat! Eleven times out of ten what they want to hide is just what we intend to print.... D'y'e get me?" inquired Robbins, and Filson said he did. "All right! And now," said the city editor, affably, "I'm meaning to give you one more chance—but only one, mind! You run along now, back to the Annette flats, and nose around till you've learned why that woman wanted her name kept out of the

paper.... And don't you come back till you do, either! Savvy?" warned Robbins, much as the business manager had warned him. "I mean it now!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Filson; and with his mind in a maze, his cheeks still tingling, the *News'* youngest cub returned to his desk, where he picked up his hat and the walking-stick that all immature reporters always affect. Afterwards, he departed on his mission.

THE day progressed; the evening hour drew near; and up-stairs in the *News'* crowded city room an increasing stir betokened that the "day desk" was

about to turn over the "schedule" to the "night desk." Halpin, the night man, already had drawn up a chair at Robbins' desk; and with their heads together the two were running over the assignment sheet.

Said Halpin as he drew a pudgy finger down the list of names, "I see you've got that gink Filson out again on that robb'ry." And idly Robbins nodded: "Oh, yes; on'y I guess I'm going to fire the dub," he mumbled. "Now you get this, don't you?" he asked interestedly, as he indicated the next entry on the list. "Morris was up here this A.M. raising Cain. He says the boss, Mr. Saul, wasn't the least satisfied with the way we'd handled the Torrance tip, and—what d'ye think?—Morris as much as accused me of layin' down!—yes, *me*, y'understand!"

"I wouldn't believe it!"

"S right!" averred Robbins. "In consequence, I've took 'nd put Olney back on the job, on'y between me an' you an' the door-post, there's nothing to that yarn. The way I've run a fine-tooth comb through Torrance, there isn't a man living that could get by me with anything! No, sir! not even if he was the Angel Gabriel." Robbins was proclaiming confidently, when as if in echo to his words, the door to the city room opened.

Then Filson appeared.

He entered quietly, not as once he had pictured himself, staggering in with his big "beat;" and having closed the door behind him, he turned and walked thoughtfully toward Robbins' desk. There, he wet his lips.

"I've got him," said Filson, his voice strangely hollow, after which, as if to phrase himself to Robbins' understanding, he added slowly: "I've got him right, Mr. Robbins!"

But somehow the city editor did not seem to understand, and a scowl leaped into his eyes. "What're you talking about? Got who?" he growled, urgently if inelegantly; and Filson gazed back in mild astonishment.

"Why, Torrance, of course!" he murmured, "—Mr. Torrance, the one you've been trying to get!" Then having said this much, Filson added a phrase, a

characteristic favorite of Robbins': "I've got him with the goods," he said; and upon that, turmoil burst forth around and about the city desk.

Omit the details—they have been fully expanded elsewhere in stories of cub reporters getting away with the big story when all the "star" men have fallen down. It is enough to say that when the commotion had subsided, Filson found himself seated knee-to-knee with Halpin and Robbins, their glowing faces held near to his, their eyes gleaming with excitement.

It was, however, with a curiously listless, unimpassioned voice that Filson gave them the details of the biggest "scoop" the *News* had landed in a long while. Doubtless he was nervously exhausted.

"It was like this," he said: "I went first, as you told me, up to the Annette flats, only just as I said this morning, there wasn't a thing in the story. The reason the lady wished to hide it was that the jewels had been taken by a young girl, a seamstress. She wanted them just to wear at her wedding, they explained, the man being an old beau of hers, a fellow from the West,—the Klondike, if I'm not mistaken. Anyhow, something or the other was said about his hitting it rich—making a million, I think it was; only of course when I heard it was nothing but a seamstress that had taken the jewels, I dropped the story—naturally," added Filson—upon which Halpin, the night man, after he had exchanged a glance with Robbins, purred softly: "Dropped it, yes!.... Great Scott!"

Robbins, however, gave vent to a startling growl.

"Hang it! I want to know about Torrance!" he exploded; and Filson peered at him in mild astonishment.

"I was coming to that," he said. "I was saying that, as the Annette story had fallen down, I wondered what I'd do. You'd told me, you see, that I wasn't to come back till I landed, so I went over to the Park to think it out—the Riverside Drive, it was; and there I had an idea. I recalled what I'd heard you say to Olney—the talk about getting Torrance, you know; and I said to myself,

"I wonder now, couldn't I just go get that story?....Then," said Filson, beaming at the two, "I went and got it."

Robbins, it seemed, dared not trust himself to speak; he sat silent now; and leaning forward, Halpin touched Filson on the knee.

"Of course you did! You got it," said Halpin. "—only how?"

"It was like this," said Filson, and a faint color mounted in his face: "I went over to the Torrance house, and rang the bell. Then the way Olney did once when I was out with him on a story, I told the butler I was a particular friend of a friend of theirs—not that I was from the *News*. So Mrs. Torrance came down to see me, and—"

"Hold on!" growled Robbins, his amazement too great to restrain now. "She never in the world gave you the story? *Her?*"

As before, Filson faintly smiled.

"I guessed you'd be surprised, Mr. Robbins, the way I've caught on. I'm the first reporter for the *News* Mrs. Torrance has ever seen. She said so after I sprung on her what I was—what I'd come there for."—and here Robbins, with another look at Halpin, hitched forward abruptly in his chair.

"Yes, yes! and then what did she say?" he pleaded.

"She said," said Filson slowly. "Oh, my God!—just like that. Mr. Robbins—Oh, my God! You should have seen her, too," he added reminiscently, "the way she went white, how her hand flew to her throat, besides. I'd read about it, only this was the first time I'd ever seen a woman do it. I turned white, too, I guess," said Filson.

"Never mind about that!" Robbins fretfully interposed. "The dame caved in, didn't she?" he demanded, eagerly. "She gave up all the facts?"

"I've got the whole story," answered Filson—"everything!" And at the reply, no longer with any effort to restrain himself, Robbins gave a grunt of exultation and snatched up the telephone on his desk.

But pausing ere he took the receiver from the hook, he turned again to Filson. His manner may be said to have been threatening. "Say, you're sure of your

facts, aint you? We don't want to get the *News* into any trouble, you know!"

Filson seemed to realize that.

"I have all the facts, Mr. Robbins—all of them; only—"

"Only what?" demanded Robbins, as Filson hesitantly broke off. An instant's alarm had sprung into his face. "What're you stalling about, hey? There's nothing wrong, is there, so that we can't print the story?" Halpin, too, stirred uneasily. "Heck! that's interesting!" muttered Halpin, for Filson's manner, every moment, seemed to grow more depressing.

"It's this way, Mr. Robbins," said Filson: "What Torrance did was done twenty years ago; and the woman, the one you've been hunting for, has been blackmailing him ever since!...Only that's not the point," added Filson, looking anxiously at Robbins, then at Halpin, then again at the city editor. "If the story gets out, it's going to make a lot of trouble for Torrance's family, of course—his wife and his boy and girl. You know that, don't you?" Filson murmured awkwardly.

Naturally Robbins knew it; and he gazed at Halpin, bewildered.

"Trouble? Well, what of that?" he returned, and Filson edged forward uncomfortably in his chair.

"I saw their pictures, Mr. Robbins—the kiddies, you know. She showed them to me—Philip and Winifred," Filson confided aimlessly; "and I was wondering if the *News* would wish to print the story, considering."

"Want to print it?" echoed Robbins, dully. Again he suddenly looked startled. "Say, you got that woman's address, didn't you?—the other woman?" Upon her the whole story depended; and to find the woman, the *News* had spared neither effort nor expense. "Say—" began Robbins, and he wet his lips—"Say—" he said, and half arose from his chair.

His fears were groundless. Filson, however miraculous it may sound, had everything; and when again he had reassured the city editor, he gazed at Robbins appealingly.

"Then it is such a big beat? Is it?" he asked,—"you're sure?"

Robbins made a gesture of impatience.

"Of course!....What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

"Nothing," replied Filson, and he slowly drew in his breath. "I just wished to make sure no one could stop you from printing the story."

But that was too much for Robbins. A snort that was almost a snarl escaped him. "Stop me?" he repeated; and then, for the first time, the *News*' city editor suffered himself to smile. "I'd just like to see anyone try it on me!" he said amiably; and with that he lifted the receiver from the hook.

"Quick, girlie!" he ordered hurriedly, when the *News*' private operator had replied. "Get me Mr. Saul!"

IN life, real life, so different from the case in fiction, events of a romantic nature are few and far between; and this is especially the case in a newspaper office. At any rate, no cub on the *News* had ever before "pulled off" a beat like this, for that it was a big beat, one of the most important the *News* had ever landed, few with any knowledge of the *News*' idea of "news" ever for a moment would doubt.

Be that as it may, though, Filson had little opportunity at the time to reap the fruits of his glory. The occasion, in fact, was not at all like he had read of in stories. In the first place, Robbins did not grasp him by the hand, and laying his other hand on Filson's shoulder, publicly acclaim him. Instead, while he waited for Mr. Saul to be summoned to the telephone, he backed Halpin into a corner to say privately. "It don't look good, bo! Nothing like this ever happened!"

Nor did Olney, the *News*' star reporter, fulfill expectations either. "What!" he exclaimed, when having wandered in to report "nothing doing," the news had been broken to him. "What! that dump? *Him*?" In his disgust, Olney walked into the managing editor's room where Filson was now ensconced; and making not the least effort to conceal his outraged senses, he drawled: "Say, kiddo, it aint *how* you got the story I'd like to know; it's how in thunder did you ever guess it *was* a story?"

This enigma, however, fate willed was never to be disclosed, for just then Robbins came hurrying in.

Evidently the occasion still did not "look good" to the *News*' city editor, for he wore upon him a singular air of mingled eagerness and trepidation. Also, between times, he scowled fiercely.

"Here, come along, you!" he ordered Filson. "Mr. Saul's waiting."

Filson sprang up in a hurry.

"I was meaning to speak of Mr. Saul!" he said eagerly. "Has Mr. Saul come down to see me?" Robbins and Olney exchanged a glance of the uttermost hopelessness. "Has he?" inquired Filson, looking from one to the other; and Robbins drew a sigh. "Say, who d'you think you are?" he inquired pleasantly. He was still explaining to Filson, perhaps with a shade of not unnatural sarcasm, that Mr. Saul was the *News*' owner, Filson his employee, when with an ejaculation, Olney fled the room. Later, the *News*' star reporter was found down the Row in "the Doctor's Place," dully apostrophizing a bottle of the "Doctor's" well-known curative. "Wouldn't it grab you?—wouldn't it?—a beautiful story like that, too!"

But to resume.

"You get a jump on!" Robbins ordered Filson. "Mr. Saul never likes to be kep' waiting!"

Events came more swiftly then; and now, moreover, they began to be much more in the character of those about which Filson often had read.

Robbins hurried, again filled with a fever of excitement. First they took a subway train, an express; and although it roared northward at top speed, its car rocking with the gait at which it traveled, Robbins sat edged forward in his seat, nibbling his fingers with impatience. Then, when they had reached the stop nearest Mr. Saul's house, Robbins piled out helter-skelter; and upstairs at the street level he beckoned furiously to a taxicab. Into this he tumbled, dragging Filson after him; and in the cab too, though it was whizzing full tilt up the Avenue, Robbins again bit his fingers fiercely.

"If we don't get there quick," he announced, "there'll be trouble. I've seen

it before. Mr. Saul will want to know all the facts before he sits down to enjoy his dinner."

Filson, plunged in thought, awoke suddenly. A little laugh, a chuckle, left him.

"Yes—only I'll bet that to-night the Torrances won't enjoy theirs!—what?"

Robbins shot a look at him. His air was as if some secret suspicion gnawed in the depths of his heart. Then, as Filson smiled, he grumbled idly, "I should worry."

There was just one more speech between them before the cab drew up at the door of Mr. Saul's residence.

"Is there any way—" began Filson, hesitatingly, then paused. "I mean," he corrected himself, "there's no chance, is there, that the Torrances could get the story killed?"

Again Robbins shot his suspicious glance at him. "Say, what's eating you, anyway?" he inquired. "Haven't I told you a'ready the *News* aint in business for its health?... Kill a story like that? For them? Why, I wouldn't ditch that story, I tell you, not if they went down on their knees to me!" averred Mr. Robbins; and Filson briefly smiled.

"I'm sure of that!—quite!" said Filson softly, so softly that for a third time Robbins shot a look at him.

"Huh?" grunted Robbins, but Filson did not reply. The cab had reached its destination: and opening the door, they stepped out upon the sidewalk.

A moment later a man-servant conducted them into the presence of Mr. Saul.

It was the first time Filson had seen the *News*' proprietor. If he had expected, however, to find him an elderly man—say, gray and keen with the ripened mental force of a Greeley, a Garrison, a Dana,—with that, or the benevolent, forgiving wisdom of a Childs,—he was doomed to disappointment. Mr. Saul was young,—not above forty,—nor did he in the least look like the great editors Filson had read about. "Mr. Saul, this is Filson, the man that landed the Torrance yarn," said Robbins; and Mr. Saul turned on Filson a pair of pale eyes. "Er—sit down," said Mr. Saul.

His interest, however, was not to be

mistaken. When Robbins briefly but skillfully had sketched the salient details of the story—Torrance's early misstep, his years of expiation, of penitence; then the woman's reappearance, her pursuit of him and now, with the publication of the tale, Torrance's probable downfall—why, then, it is only just to say, Mr. Saul showed his complete approbation. First, his pale eyes lighted. Then, as Filson noted, at each fresh detail Mr. Saul wet his lips, his wide, flaccid mouth making a little noise as he did so.

"You are—ah—quite sure," he asked, however, with commendable caution, "that there can be no mistake about this young man's facts? The *News* must get into no trouble."

"Now don't you worry any!" Robbins eagerly assured him. Inspired by Mr. Saul's evident satisfaction, he had again taken heart. "The minute I got the dame's address—beg pardon, I mean the party's," the city editor choicely corrected himself, "I rushed a man right up there; and she confirmed everything—the law-suit and all. A good part of what she says is fake, of course; but as she's sued on it, that lets us out. Anyway, if we print on'y what's in the law papers, they can't get us on any libel, I guess!"

He was right. It was a nice point in the law, a loophole, of which the *News* had often cheerfully taken advantage; and assured of this, Mr. Saul no longer withheld his compliments.

He turned to Filson, smiling heartily.

"I congratulate you!" said Mr. Saul. "In behalf of the *News*, I offer you my heartiest good wishes! A great career is open to you, I believe. Be loyal, be diligent," the *News*' proprietor was exhorting eloquently, when all at once, Filson stirred. It was as if he awakened from a trance.

Until the moment, as if plunged in thought, he had sat nibbling his fingers, his air vague and unresponsive even when Robbins had waxed enthusiastic. Now he spoke.

"Mr. Saul—" he said.

"I repeat, diligent and loyal," said Mr. Saul, and was about to say still more when Filson spoke again.

"Never mind that, Mr. Saul. I'd like to say something," he observed; and gazing momentarily at Robbins, who had begun covertly, at the same time frantically, to signal him, Filson asked: "You really mean, then, to use the story?"

"Use it?" echoed Mr. Saul, his air puzzled. Inquiringly, he turned to Robbins, but the city editor, for some reason, stood speechless. "Use it, eh?" repeated Mr. Saul; and a laugh, or it was rather a giggle, escaped him. "I'd like to know why not?" he asked.

Then Filson, his voice quiet, took a step toward him.

"That's what I wished to find out," he said. "I wanted to know if you felt like all the others—that the story was so big, such a great beat, after all. . . . No, wait!" Filson added hurriedly, as Mr. Saul wet his lips as if to say something. "If the *News* prints the story, you know what'll happen, don't you, to the Torrances? They will be ruined, perhaps. It may break up the family, besides!"

"Break it up?" Mr. Saul alertly started. "A divorce, you mean?" he demanded. Robbins, too, seemed to awake.

"Say," he protested, "you didn't say anything about this before!" He glanced at Mr. Saul, then, his manner a little excited. "I guess I'd better get busy on the 'phone, Mr. Saul!" he was saying when Mr. Saul silenced him with a peremptory gesture. His eyes were still on Filson.

"A divorce, eh?" he repeated, his wide, loose lips again making a little sound. "Tell me, in her suit, who has—ah—Mrs. Torrance named? The—ah—other woman, the one blackmail—I mean, suing him?"

Filson, after a look at him, slowly shook his head.

"I said nothing about a divorce," he answered. "I only told you that if the *News* published the story it would break up Torrance's family." Then, all at once, a change came over Filson's face. He looked up suddenly, his eyes filled with a trouble he no longer tried to hide. "Oh, I know what you think, Mr. Saul—and I know besides what Robbins there is thinking. I heard him tell Hal-

pin, the night city editor, that I was a dub, a dummy, and—well, maybe I am. Anyway, if some other man on the *News* had landed the story,—there's Olney, say,—I don't suppose he'd make the fuss over it that I'm making. I can't help it, though!" said Filson, and he gave a sudden gulp. "It's the first big story I've ever had, you know—only that's nothing." He suddenly looked up.

"Mr. Saul," said Filson, firmly, "it's no go! The *News* can't print that story!"

There was a sudden stir. Filson, as he faced the two, was aware that Robbins, shoving back his chair with a crash, arose tumultuously, while Mr. Saul, emitting a grunt, sat bolt upright.

"Can't?" said Mr. Saul, his inflection rising. "Who says we can't?"

"I do," said Filson, though politely; then Robbins caught his breath again.

"Huh! I get you now!" cried Mr. Robbins. "I get you! I guessed from the first what was eating you!—that you'd be up to some sneaking dodge like this! Wanta throw me down, don't you? I'm onto you!" said Mr. Robbins, his voice rising keenly; and he was going on to say more in the same impulsive way, when the sound of Filson's voice, speaking evenly, disconcerted him. He paused, his curiosity startled.

"You ought to have seen her, Mr. Saul," Filson was saying, as he stood with outstretched hands, his voice eloquent, appealing to the owner of the *News*. "She was as white as the wall, shaking like a leaf, too, and if I'd let her, I think she'd have gone down on her knees to me! . . . And that wasn't all, either," added Filson. "When she thought her own pleading wasn't doing any good, she sprung open a locket she wore and showed me the pictures of her babies. She said she'd let the kiddies plead, asking me if I was willing to send them through life knowing they had a smirch like that on their names! . . . Well, that *got* me!" confessed Filson, as he looked appealingly at Mr. Saul. "I got to thinking what it'd do to those children if I were to print the story. Then, after that, I wondered how I'd like it myself if some one were to do something like that to me! . . . And just

think of it!" Filson abruptly exclaimed, "—all the fuss we're making is over something that happened more than twenty years ago! We can't print anything like that, can we?—even though that other woman has sued? Why, no!" he cried; and with parted lips, his eyes eager, he beamed confidently at Mr.

Saul. "No, of course we can't!" cried Filson, when the *News'* proprietor arose.

Mr. Saul was smiling vaguely. Besides, he had arched his eyebrows curiously; and drawing out his watch he glanced at it, then at the bewildered Robbins. Evidently he had something to say, for his wide, loose lips had just formed them-



"If the *News* prints the story, you know what'll happen, don't you, to the Torrences?"

selves to speak when the door behind him opened. A young woman appeared. She was in a dinner dress, smart to a degree, and around her bare throat hung a string of pearls.

Apparently, the young woman had not expected to find the room occupied, for she started.

"Excuse me, Roger!" she exclaimed. "I didn't know you were with friends!" She was retreating hurriedly, when Robbins, stammering and embarrassed, addressed her.

"Mrs. Saul, I believe?" said Robbins; and Mrs. Saul gazed at her husband inquiringly.

His manner was indifferent.

"It's just a couple of men from the office. Run along, Madge," said Mr. Saul; and Mrs. Saul raised her eyebrows slightly. "Oh, reporters?" she said, only the inflection was strong in rising. "*Reporters!*... Oh," said Mrs. Saul; then she withdrew.

Mr. Saul, however, seemed quite annoyed. First, he closed his watch with a snap—after which, with his brows drawn together, he turned back to Robbins. "Have you anything else to tell me?" he inquired. Evidently, Robbins had not, for dumbly he shook his head. "Very well, you may go," Mr. Saul said curtly; and going to the door through which Mrs. Saul had just departed, he turned and with his eyes severely on Robbins, he jerked his head toward Filson. "It might be well, Robbins," he said tartly, "if you advised this fellow that the *News* is a newspaper—not an infant's academy. Let me add, I do not in the least like the way my time has been wasted. You must see it does not happen in the future!"

He had already opened the door when Filson's cry arrested him.

"I see what you mean! You intend the story to be printed!"

Then, to their inconceivable astonishment, Filson sped swiftly to the window that looked out on the street; and drawing the shade aside, he peered out into the dark. A moment later, he turned and again faced the *News'* proprietor.

"Can't anything move you?" he asked; and his voice now was deep with feeling, "I've done all I could, but I haven't

seemed to gain anything. I wonder if you'd listen to anyone else?" Then he waved his hand toward the street outside. "Mr. Saul," said Filson, impressively, "Mrs. Torrance is there, waiting in a cab." Mr. Saul started. "Yes, Mr. Saul, she said it was no use, but I begged her to come and see you, if only on a chance. You haven't any quarrel with her, have you?"

"Quarrel?" Mr. Saul frowned suddenly. "Look here, you—" he began, but Filson only smiled the more appealingly.

"Another thing, Mr. Saul: It wasn't Torrance that made all that fuss about the *News*—having it thrown out of all those clubs, you know. She swears it isn't true. She says it isn't so, either, that they are the ones that have kept you out of society... No, please let me finish!" Filson cried impulsively, as Mr. Saul drew up in indignation. "She's willing to tell you all this herself—only that's not the point. Just think," he appealed: "you don't want to feel that you've ruined her life, do you?—her children's lives, as well! Yes!—and let me ask you something else," Filson hurriedly added: "How would you feel, either, if you were in Torrance's boots?—if some one were going to do this to you?—to *your* wife?—your children too?... Ah, that's it!" cried Filson. "How would you like it if the *Sphere*, say, ruined your life?—the lives of your wife and children besides? I saw your wife just now, Mr. Saul—and how would you like it to see *her* played up in the *Sphere*!"

But that was too much! Mr. Saul's face suddenly grew purple.

"Don't you mention my wife!" he exploded. "*—you—a reporter!—a reporter for the News!* How dare you?" Then, with an effort, Mr. Saul controlled himself. He pointed toward the door. "Go!" he said.

But Filson did not go.

"I know I'm a reporter—a reporter for the *News*, besides," he said quietly; "but don't let's speak of that!" Then he smiled. "Just let me say, Mr. Saul," he added, gently, "you will never print that story. I'll tell you why. It's because I won't write it," said Filson; and then, with his eyes fixed on Mr. Saul, he displayed the first, the only satisfaction he

had felt since the moment he'd landed the Torrance story.

He grinned.

His triumph, however, was of short duration. Picking up his hat, he had turned to the door, when he heard Robbins emit a snort, a grunt.

The *News'* city editor had awakened.

"Oh, you wont write it, wont you?" mimicked Robbins, his scorn, his exultance, unmistakable. "Do you suppose we'd let a dummy like you write it, anyway. Why, you dub, you dummy," he'd begun, when Mr. Saul checked him.

"You must not raise your voice!" Mr. Saul ordered, and he pointed to the door. "Go!—get out!—both of you!" he said.

Filson had turned quite white.

"You've had some one else write it, have you?" he said slowly. "You have tricked me, have you?" he asked. "Very well," said Filson.

Then, for the first time, Filson's face grew hard.

"Mr. Saul," he said, "I gave my promise the story never would get into the *News*. There is still another reason why it never will." And fumbling at his hat, his face coloring but still resolute, Filson stared at the *News'* proprietor. "Awhile ago, something was said about the Torrances separating—about a divorce. You remember, you asked me if she had named the other woman. Well, she hasn't—not yet, at any rate. If you print the story, though, she may not only name the woman, but she may give the whole affair to the *Sphere*, the *News'* rival—I might say, its enemy!"

"Eh, what?" exclaimed Saul, and a startled look swept into his face. "What's that?"

"Just what I say," Filson returned calmly. "Mrs. Torrance is fighting for her children's good name, their happiness besides; and she's desperate. There's no telling what she'll do.... Of course," he added, and for an instant he smiled reminiscently, "no one knows a thing against the woman she will name. The woman is innocent, quite guiltless, though as you yourself said, gentlemen, that doesn't matter. Remember, so long

as the *Sphere* prints only what is in the legal papers, you can't get it on any libel suit! Wasn't that what you said?" inquired Filson.

Then suddenly he leaned forward.

"I ask you again, Mr. Saul—how do you like it yourself?"

After that, giving Saul no time to answer, Filson told him what he meant.

"It isn't true, of course, but how would you like to read in the *Sphere*, Mr. Saul, that Mrs. Torrance had named your wife?"

A long pause followed, half a minute at least of appalled, startling silence. During it, Filson passed to the door, and opening it, he turned. Aimlessly he smiled.

"I guess, after that, I'm fired, aint I?" asked Filson, but neither Saul nor Robbins answered. They still were gaping. "Oh, well," sighed Filson, wearily, "I don't believe I was much use to the *News* anyway. I'm nothing but a dub, I guess!"

Then he bowed.

"I bid you good night!" said Filson.

OUT in the street, a moment later, Filson opened the door of a cab that stood waiting at the curb. A woman sat inside. Her face was abject, and silently she wept. "There, there! don't you do that!" soothed Filson in alarm. "It's all right—everything—I assure you!"

The woman looked up, startled.

"He agreed not to print it?.... What?" she cried. "Why, I was told he would refuse even if I got down on my knees to him!"

Filson reached out and softly patted her hand.

"Mr. Saul was very nice," he said. "After I told him what I did, he agreed instantly not to use it."

Then, in recollection, Filson briefly smiled.

"I reminded him, you know, how he would feel if he were in your boots. Instantly, he saw the point. I don't suppose he had ever been made to see it before.... Why!" exclaimed Filson, enthusiastically, "he didn't even make so much as a single objection!"

The Preceding Installments of "GOD'S COUNTRY—AND THE WOMAN"

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD, student of the far North, has found knighthood still in flower up there in "God's Country." It is near the rim of the Arctic where you first meet his knight and the beautiful daughter of a descendant of one of those English nobles who came out to the new world three hundred years ago.

Philip Weyman is an American doing government research. After two years he starts south for home. Six hundred miles from the nearest town, he comes on a wonderful girl of pure English type.

The girl is terror stricken. But Weyman's manner is straightforward, and when he tells her he is from the North, she is strangely reassured, and Weyman sees her terror was for more than him. She confides that she is hiding from an enemy. He begs her to tell him her trouble.

"Would you do a great deal for me—like a man?" she asks.

He bows his head. Then he learns she wants him to assume the name Philip Paul Darcambal, go back to her home with her and pose as her husband. He is to protect her, to fight for her blindly. He is never to ask the reason, and in the end, he is to go into the woods and die—to her and those who know her.

Philip is staggered. But his captivation by the beauty and charm of this wondrous forest girl is so complete that he accepts.

Indians come to fetch the girl home. She insists on meeting the leader of the party, Jean Jacques Croisset, a half-breed, alone. After a few words, Jean goes to Philip and says significantly:

"I am glad it is you that chance sent us, M'sieur Weyman. Our Josephine trusts you as she would not one in a million." Then with glittering eyes: "And for you—death, unless you play your part like a man."

For two days and nights they travel through wilds. Josephine tells Philip she is the daughter of John Adare, of Adare House, a mansion in the wilderness. It is at Adare House that "Something will happen that will turn your heart to stone and ice," Jean Croisset warns Weyman the last day of the trip.

As they land, fifty huskies bound

for Josephine. They are her forest body-guard. At Adare House, Weyman is assigned to a luxurious room. At a window he sees a face distorted with murderous hate peering at him.

The mysteries of Adare House increase. Josephine tells him her father and mother are arriving unexpectedly, and the time to tell him her secret has come. She leads him to her room, where a lovely baby is sleeping. "You remember I told you I spent one year in Montreal," she says with bowed head. "It is my baby." Philip is dazed, but somehow feels her story cannot be true, and his adoration does not wane.

Then comes John Adare and his wife, Miriam. Adare is a splendid giant, and his wife is beautiful. Adare's eyes follow her with worship, but between Josephine and her mother Philip notices a coldness. Adare accepts Philip whole-heartedly as Josephine's North-exploring husband whom he has never seen, but the wife makes him suspect she knows Josephine's secret.

Later a rifle ball whizzes through Philip's window. He rushes out and comes on his man in the edge of the forest. After a fight Philip staggers back to his room and finds Croisset waiting for him. Philip tells the half-breed of his experience and learns that the intruder's bullet was for Adare, whose old room Philip has, and that the man's enmity is a part of the menacing mystery that hangs over Adare House. Croisset goes in pursuit of the man.

Philip's love for the genial master of Adare House grows, as does his worship of Josephine. He satisfies Adare's curiosity about himself and learns Adare is worried about his wife, Miriam, whose health is failing from no apparent cause. He also tells Philip he would like to rid the country of a free trader's den of thieves and cut-throats that is only thirty-five miles from his place. This rendezvous is one of a string owned by a man named Lang, in Montreal. Adare asks Philip if he will stay at Adare House. Philip promises he will.

A few minutes later Josephine tells Philip she cannot marry him secretly as he wishes, although she loves him. She says he must leave Adare House at the end of a month.

A SPLENDID NEW NOVEL OF THE NORTH BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE "KAZAN" STORIES



Miriam

God's Country— and the Woman

By James Oliver Curwood

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ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

XV

AFTER a little the trail through the thick spruce grew narrow and dark, and Josephine went ahead of Philip. He followed so close that he could reach out a hand and touch her. She had not replaced her hood. Her face was flushed and her lips parted and red when she turned to him now and then. His heart beat with a tumultuous joy as he followed. A few moments before, he had not spoken to her boastfully, or to keep up a falling spirit. He had given voice to what was in his heart, what was there now, telling him that she belonged to him, that she loved him, that there could be nothing in the world that would long stand between them.

The voice of the pack came to them stronger each moment, yet for a space it was unheard by him. His mind—all the

senses he possessed—traveled no farther than the lithesome red and gold figure ahead of him. The thick strands of her braid had become partly undone, covering her waist and hips in a shimmering veil of gold. He wanted to touch that rare treasure with his hands. He was filled with the desire to stop her, and hold her close in his arms. And yet he knew that this was a thing which he must not do. For him she had risen above a thing merely physical. The touching of her hair, her lips, her face were no longer the first passions of love with him. And because Josephine knew these things, the joyous flush rose in her face and the wonder-light in her eyes. The still, deep forests had long ago brought her dreams of this man. And these same forests seemed to whisper to Philip that her beauty was a part of her soul, and that it was not to be desecrated

in such moments of desire as he was fighting back in himself now.

Suddenly she ran a little ahead of him, and then stopped. A moment later he stood at her side. They were peering into what looked like a great dimly lighted and carpeted hall. For a space of a hundred feet in diameter the spruce had been thinned out. The trees that remained were lopped of their lower branches, leaving their upper parts crowding in a dense shelter that shut out cold and storm. No snow had filtered through their tops, and on the ground lay cedar and balsam needles two inches deep, a brown and velvety carpet that shone with the deep luster of a Persian rug.

The place was filled with moving shapes and with gleaming eyes that were half fire in the gloom. Here were leashed the forty fierce and wolfish beasts of the pack. The dogs had ceased their louder clamor, and at sight of Josephine and sound of her voice as she cried out greeting to them, there ran through the whole space a whining and a clinking of chains, and with that a snapping of jaws that sent a momentary shiver up Philip's back.

Josephine took him by the hand now. With him she ran in among them, calling out their names, laughing with them, caressing the shaggy heads that were thrust against her—until it seemed to Philip that every beast in the pit was straining at the end of his chain to get at them and rend them into pieces. And yet above this thought, the nervousness that he could not fight out of himself, rose the wonder of it all.

Philip had seen a husky snap off a man's hand at a single lunge; he knew it was a creature of the whip and the club, with the hatred of men inborn in it from the wolf. What he looked on now filled him with a sort of awe—and a fear for Josephine. He gave a warning cry and half drew his pistol when she dropped on her knees and flung her arms about the shaggy head of a huge beast that could have torn the life from her in an instant. She looked up at him, laughing, the inch-long fangs of Captain, the lead-dog, gleaming in brute

happiness close to her soft, flushed face.

"Don't be afraid, Philip!" she cried. "They are my pets—all of them. This is Captain, who leads my sledge team. Isn't he magnificent?"

"Good God," breathed Philip, looking about him. "I know something of sledge dogs, Josephine. These are not from mongrel breeds. There are no hounds, no maulmutes, none of the soft-footed breeds here. They are *wolf*!"

She rose and stood beside him, panting, triumphant, glorious.

"Yes—they've all got the strain of wolf," she said. "That is why I love them, Philip. They are of the forests. *And I have made them love me!*"

A YELLOW beast with small, dangerous eyes was leaping fiercely at the end of his chain close to them. Philip pointed to him.

"And you would trust yourself *there!*" he exclaimed, catching her by the arm.

"That is Hero," she said. "Once his name was Soldier. Three years ago a man from Thoreau's Place offered me an insult in the woods, and Soldier almost killed him. He would have killed him if I had not dragged him off. From that day I have called him Hero. He is a quarter-strain wolf."

She went to the husky, and the yellow giant leaped up against her, so that her arms were about him, with his wolfish muzzle reaching for her face. Under the cedars Philip's face was as white as the snow out in the open. Josephine saw this, and came and put her arm through his fondly.

"You are afraid for me, Philip?" she asked, with a little laugh of pleasure at his anxiety. "You mustn't be, for you must love them—for my sake. I have brought them all up from puppyhood. And they would fight for me—just as you would fight for me, Philip. Once I was lost in a storm. Father turned the dogs loose. And they found me—miles and miles away. When you hear the wonderful stories I have to tell about them you will love them. They will not harm you. They will harm nothing that I have touched. I have taught them that. I am going to unleash them now.

Metootsin is coming along the trail with their frozen fish."

Before she had moved, Philip went straight up to the yellow creature that she had told him was a quarter wolf.

"Hero!" He spoke softly. "Hero—"

He held out his hands. The giant husky's eyes burned a deeper glow; for an instant his upper lip drew back, baring his stiletto-like fangs, and the hair along his neck and back stood up like a brush. Then inch by inch, his muzzle drew nearer to Philip's steady hands, and a low whine rose in his throat. His crest drooped; his ears shot forward a little, and Philip's hand rested on the wolfish head.

"That is proof," he laughed, turning to Josephine. "If he had snapped off my hand I would say that you were wrong."

She passed quickly from one dog to another now, with Philip close at her side, and from the collar of each dog she snapped the chain. After she had freed a dozen, Philip began to help her. A few of the huskies snarled at him. Others accepted him already as a part of her. Yet in their eyes he saw the smoldering menace, the fire that wanted only a word from her to turn them into a horde of tearing demons.

At first he was startled by Josephine's confidence in them. Then he was only amazed. She was not only unafraid herself; she was unafraid for him. She knew that they would not touch him. When they were all free, the pack gathered in close about them, and then Josephine came and stood at Philip's side, and put her hands to his shoulders. Thus she stood for a few moments, half facing the dogs, calling their names again; and they crowded up still closer about them, until Philip fancied that he could feel their warm breath.

"They have all seen me with you now," she cried after that. "They have seen me touch you. Not one of them will snap at you after this."

THE dogs swept on ahead of them in a great wave as they left the spruce shelter. Out in the clear light Philip drew a deep breath. He had never seen anything like this pack. They crowded

shoulder to shoulder, body to body, in the open trail. Most of them were the tawny dun and gray and yellow of the wolf. There were a few blacks, and a few pure whites, but none that wore the mongrel spots of the soft-footed and softer-throated dogs from the South.

He shivered as he measured the pent-up power, the destructive possibilities, of the whining, snapping, living sea of sinew and fang ahead of them. And they were Josephine's! They were her slaves! What need had she of his protection? What account would be the insignificant automatic at his side in the face of this wild horde that awaited only a word from her? What could there be in these forests that she feared, with them at her command? Ten men with rifles could not have stood in the face of their first mad rush—and yet she had told him that everything depended upon his protection. He had thought that meant physical protection. But it could not be. He spoke his thoughts aloud, pointing to the dogs.

"What danger can there be in this world that you need fear—with them?" he asked. "I don't understand. I can't guess."

She knew what he meant. The hand on his arm pressed a little closer to him.

"Please don't try to understand," she answered in a low voice. "They would fight for me. I have seen them tear a wolf-pack into shreds. And I have called them back from the throat of a wind-run deer, so that not a hair of her was harmed. But, Philip, I guess that sometimes mistakes were made in the creation of things. They have a brain. But it isn't reason."

"You mean—" he cried.

"That you, a man unarmed, alone, are still their master," she interrupted him. "In the face of reason they are powerless. See, there comes Metootsin with the frozen fish! What if the fish were poisoned?"

"I understand," he replied. "But others drive them besides you?"

"Only those very near to the family. Twenty of them are used in the traces. The others are my companions—my body-guard, I call them."

Metootsin approached them now,



weighted down under a heavy load in a gunny-sack, and Philip believed that he recognized in the silent Indian the man whom he had first seen at the door of Adare House with a rifle in his hands. At a few commands from Josephine the dogs gathered about them, and Metoosin opened the bag.

"I want you to throw them the fish, Philip," said Josephine. "Their brains comprehend the hand that feeds them. It is a sort of pledge of friendship between you and them."

With Metoosin she drew a dozen steps back, and Philip found that he

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had become the center of interest for the pack. One by one he pulled out the fish. Snapping jaws met the frozen feast in midair. There was no fighting—no vengeful jealousy of fang. Once when a gray-and-yellow husky snapped at a fish already in the jaws of another. Josephine reprimanded him sharply, and at the sound of his name he slunk back. One by one Philip threw out the fish until they were all gone. Then he stood and looked down upon the flat-bellied pack, listening to the crunching of bones and frozen flesh, and Josephine came and stood beside him again.

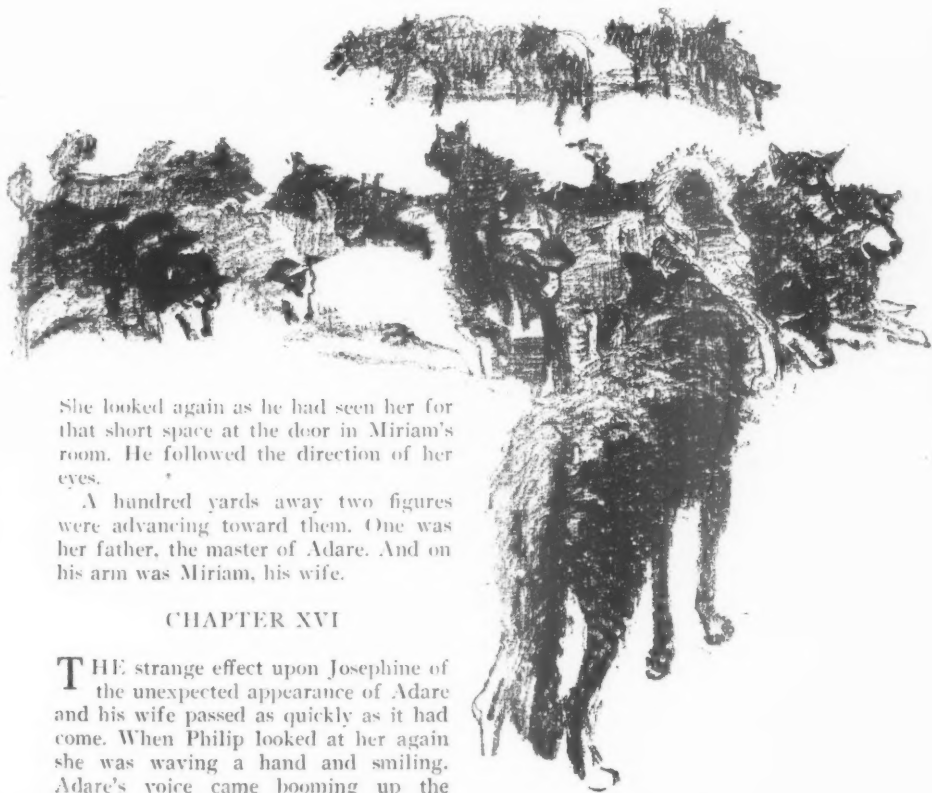
Suddenly he felt her start. He looked up, and saw that her face was turned down the trail. He had caught the quick change in her eyes, the swift tenseness that flashed for an instant in her mouth. The vivid color in her face had paled.

trail. Philip saw Miriam laughing. Yet in spite of himself—even as he returned Adare's greeting—he could not keep himself from looking at the two women with curious emotions.

"This is rank mutiny!" cried Adare as they came up. "I told them they must sleep until noon. I have already punished Miriam. And you, *Mignonne*? Does Philip let you off too easily?"

Adare's wife had given Philip her hand. A few hours rest had brightened her eyes and brought color into her face. She looked still younger, still more beautiful. And Adare was riotous with joy because of it.

"Look at your mother, Josephine," he commanded in a hoarse whisper, meant for all to hear. "I said the forests would do more than a thousand doctors in Montreal!"



She looked again as he had seen her for that short space at the door in Miriam's room. He followed the direction of her eyes.

A hundred yards away two figures were advancing toward them. One was her father, the master of Adare. And on his arm was Miriam, his wife.

CHAPTER XVI

THE strange effect upon Josephine of the unexpected appearance of Adare and his wife passed as quickly as it had come. When Philip looked at her again she was waving a hand and smiling. Adare's voice came booming up the

"You do look splendid, *Mikawe*," said Josephine, slipping an arm about her mother's waist.

Adare had turned with a sudden volley of greetings to the feasting dogs, and for another moment Philip's eyes were on mother and daughter. Josephine was the taller of the two by half a head. She was more like her father. He noted that the color had not returned fully into her cheeks, while the flush in Miriam's face had deepened. There was something forced in Josephine's laugh, a note that was unreal and make-believe, as she turned to Philip.

"Isn't my mother wonderful, Philip? I call her *Mikawe* because that means a little more than *Mother* in Cree—something that is almost undying and spirit-like. You will never grow old, my little mother!"

"Ponce de Leon made a big mistake when he didn't search in these forests for his fountain of eternal youth," said Adare, laying a hand on Philip's shoulder. "Would you guess that it was twenty-two years ago a month from to-day that she came to be mistress of Adare House? And you, *ma chérie*," added Adare tenderly, taking his wife by the hand, "do you remember that it was over this same trail that we took our first walk—from home? We went to the Chasm."

"Yes, I remember."

"And here—where we stand—the wood violets were so thick they left perfume on our boots."

"And you made me a wreath of them—with the red *bakweesh*," said Miriam softly.

"And braided it in your hair."

"Yes."

She was breathing a little more quickly. For a moment it seemed as if these two had forgotten Philip and Josephine. Their eyes had turned to each other.

"Twenty-two years ago—a month from to-day," repeated Josephine.

It seemed as if she had spoken the words that Philip might catch their hidden meaning.

Adare straightened with a sudden idea.

"On that day we shall have a great anniversary feast," he declared. "We will ask every soul—red and white—for a hundred miles about, with the exception of the rogues over at Thoreau's Place! What do you say, Philip?"

"Splendid!" cried Philip, catching triumphantly at this straw in the face of Josephine's plans for him. He looked straight into her eyes as he spoke. "A month from to-day these forests shall ring with our joy. And there will be a reason for it—*more than one*."

She could not misunderstand that! And Philip's heart beat joyously as Josephine turned quickly to her mother, the color flooding to the tips of her ears.

The dogs had eaten their fish and were crowding about them. For the first time Adare seemed to notice Metoosin, who had stood motionless twenty paces behind them.

"Where is Jean?" he asked.

Josephine shook her head.

"I haven't seen him since last night."

"I had almost forgotten what I believe he intended me to tell you," said Philip. "He has gone somewhere in the forest. He may be away all day."

PHILIP saw the anxious look that crept into Josephine's eyes. She looked at him closely, questioning, yet he guessed that beyond what he had said she wanted him to remain silent. A little later, when Adare and his wife were walking ahead of them, she asked:

"Where is Jean? What did he tell you last night?"

Philip remembered Jean's warning.

"I cannot tell you," he replied evasively. "Perhaps he has gone out to reconnoiter for—game."

"You are true," she breathed softly. "I guess I understand. Jean doesn't want me to know. But after I went to bed I lay awake a long time and thought of you—out in the night with that gun in your hand. I can't believe that you were there simply because of a noise, as you said. A man like you doesn't hunt for a noise with a pistol, Philip. What is the matter with your arm?"

The directness of her question startled him.

"Why do you ask that?" he managed to stammer.

"You have flinched twice when I touched it—this arm."

"A trifle," he assured her. "It should have healed by this time."

She smiled straight up into his eyes.

"You are too true to tell me fairy stories in a way that I must believe them, Philip? Day before yesterday your sleeves were up when you were paddling, and there was nothing wrong with this arm—this forearm—then. But I'm not going to question you. You don't want me to know." In the same breath she recalled his attention to her father and mother. "I told you they were lovers! Look!"

As if she had been a little child, John Adare had taken his wife up in his arms and sat her high on the trunk of a fallen tree that was still held four or five feet above the ground by a crippled spruce. Philip heard him laugh. He saw the wife lean over, still clinging for safety to her husband's shoulders.

"It is beautiful," he said.

Josephine spoke as if she had not heard him.

"I do not believe there is another man in the world quite like my father. I cannot understand how a woman could cease to love such a man as he even for a day—an hour. She couldn't forget, could she?"

There was something almost plaintive in her question. As if she feared an answer, she went on quickly:

"He has made her happy. She is almost forty—thirty-nine her last birthday. She does not look that old. She has been happy. Only happiness keeps one young. And he is fifty. If it wasn't for his beard, I believe he would appear ten years younger. I have never known him without a beard; I like him that way. It makes him look 'beasty'—and I love beasts." --

SHE ran ahead of him, and John Adare lifted his wife down from the tree when they joined them. This time Josephine took her mother's arm. At the door to Adare House she turned to the two men, and said:

"Mother and I have a great deal to talk over, and we are scheming not to see you again until dinner time. Little Daddy, you can go to your foxes. And please keep Philip out of mischief."

The dogs had followed her close to the door. As the men entered after Josephine and her mother, Philip paused for a moment to look at the pack. A dozen of them had already settled themselves upon their bellies in the snow.

"The Grand Guard," chuckled Adare, waiting for him. "Come, Philip. I'm going to follow *Mignonne's* suggestion and do some work on my foxes. Jean had a splendid surprise for me when I returned—a magnificent black. This is the dull season, when I can amuse myself only by writing and experimenting. A little later, when the furs begin to come in, there will be plenty of life at Adare House."

"Do you buy many furs?" asked Philip.

"Yes. But not because I am in the business for money. Josephine got me into it because of her love for the forest people." He led the way into his big study, and added, as he threw off his cap and coat, "You know they have been starving for more than two hundred years—these men, women and little children of the trap-lines. You have noticed how thin-waisted they are. It's the result of two centuries of hunger. The Big Company has been just good enough to keep them alive."

"For a two-thousand-dollar black fox I have seen it give to an Indian a sackful of flour and sugar and tea and tobacco that you could buy down in Montreal for thirty dollars. That was an exception. But it is bad enough—when they take his forty-dollar lynx for five dollars, and charge four dollars for six pounds of sugar. It may be nice to go to a Waldorf or an Astor and pay twenty dollars for a dinner occasionally. But you wouldn't like to do that every meal of your life, would you? And every time that John the Trapper gives himself and his wife what you and I would call a square meal he pays the equivalent of half a dozen beaver skins for it."

"That's why Josephine started me

buying furs. I bring in supplies at a twenty-per-cent profit. We give John the Trapper eighty per cent of the value of his skins. For that reason the people about us are living. They are not dying because of waists that are too thin. It's Josephine. She's made the one oasis of life in all this Northland!"

The giant's eyes were flushed with enthusiasm again. He pushed the cigars across the table to Philip, and one of his fists was knotted.

"She wants me to publish a lot of those things," he went on. "She says they are facts that would interest the whole world. Perhaps that is so. It may be that there are not many people who know that up here at the top end of the world there is a country of forest and stream and sunshine twenty times as large as the state of Ohio, and in which the population per square mile is less than that of the Great African Desert. You are standing this minute in the center of a country as large as England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales combined, and in which the total population wouldn't make much more than a country village—say a town of two or three thousand souls! And it's all because of starvation. Everything goes back to that. This summer there was a little post to the south where thirty-eight men, women and children died of the measles! Think of that! Some of those 'nature-students' over on the shelf say that John the Trapper is dying off because of weak lungs. It's not that. It's *weak stomach*. His belt has been drawn too tight for two hundred years. And when a little sickness comes, he lies down and dies. Good God—it's he who has made the first and biggest trust on earth—by starving himself to death! That's why Josephine makes me buy fur."

He pointed to the wall behind Philip. Over the door through which they had come hung a huge old-fashioned flint-lock six feet in length. There was something like the snarl of an animal in John Adare's voice when he spoke again.

"That's what I call the 'blood gun,'" he said. "For generations without num-

ber, John the Trapper had to give a pile of packed furs as high as that gun in order to possess the gun itself. It was worth a few dollars. The furs were worth hundreds—thousands. He is still largely one of God's men, this John the Trapper. He hasn't any measurements of value. He doesn't know what the dollar means. He measures his wealth in 'skins,' and when he trades, the basis for whatever mental calculations he may make is in the form of lead bullets taken from one tin pan and transferred to another. He doesn't keep track of figures. He trusts alone to the white man's word—the Company's word. And he is the first trust-builder in the world. He is the biggest trust-maker in the world. He has made lords, and great men, and millionaires without end. A billion women have proudly worn his tribute. On a million soft breasts to-day rest the velvety offerings still warm with his life's blood. For two centuries he has been the one absolutely dependable knight of womankind. And all that time he has been dying because he had to draw his belt too tight!"

"You have written all this?" asked Philip.

"Yes—and much more," laughed Adare, carelessly now. He ran a hand through his shaggy hair, as if rousing himself from an unpleasant dream. "But this isn't working on my foxes, is it? On second thought I think I shall postpone that until to-morrow, Philip. I have promised Miriam that I will have Metoosin trim my hair and beard before dinner. I have trained him to that. Shall I send him to you?"

"A hair-cut would be a treat," said Philip, rising. He was surprised at the sudden change in the other's mood. But he was not sorry that Adare had given him the opportunity to go. He had planned to say other things to Josephine that morning if they had not been interrupted, and he did not believe that she would be long with her mother.

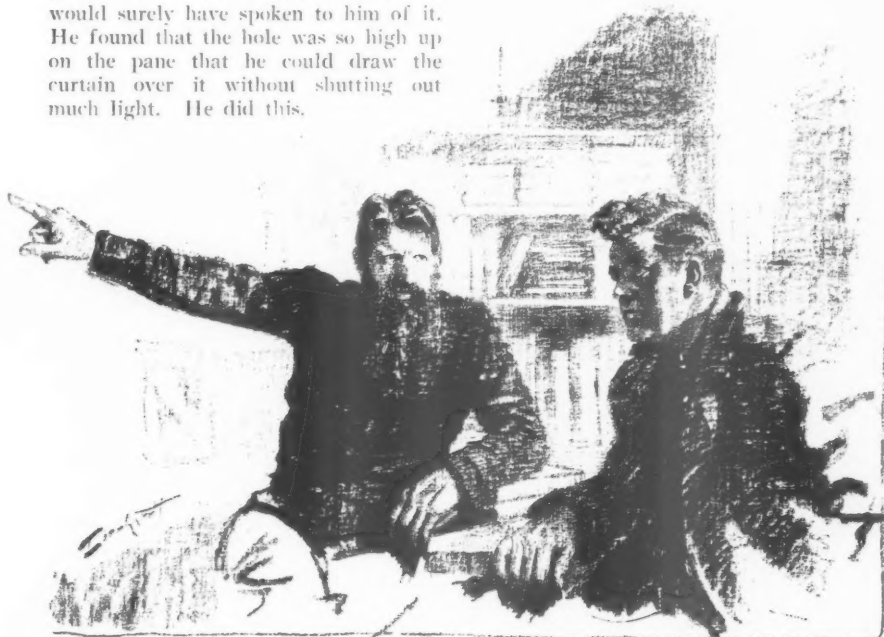
IN this, however, he was doomed to disappointment. When he returned to his room he found that Josephine had

not forgotten the condition of his wardrobe, and he guessed immediately why she had surprised them all by rising so early. On his bed were spread several changes of shirts and underwear, a pair of new corduroy trousers, a pair of caribou skin leggings, and moccasins. In a box were a dozen linen handkerchiefs and a number of ties for the blue-gray soft shirts Josephine had chosen for him. He was not much ahead of Metoosin, who came in a few minutes later and clipped his hair. When this was done and he had clad himself in his new raiment he looked at himself in the mirror. Josephine had shown splendid judgment. Everything fitted him.

For an hour he listened for footsteps in the hall, and occasionally looked out of the win low. He wondered if Josephine had seen the small round hole with its myriad of out-shooting cracks where the bullet had pierced the glass. He made up his mind that she had not, for no one could mistake it, and she would surely have spoken to him of it. He found that the hole was so high up on the pane that he could draw the curtain over it without shutting out much light. He did this.

Later he went outside, and found that the dogs regarded him with certain signs of friendship. In him was a growing presentiment that something had happened to Jean. He was sure that Croiset had taken up the trail of the man who had shot at him, soon after they had separated at the grave-sides. He was equally certain that the chase would be short. Jean was quick. Dogs and sledge would be an impediment for the other in the darkness of night. Before this, hours ago, they must have met. If Jean had come out of that meeting unharmed it was time for him to be showing up at Adare House. Still greater perturbation filled Philip's mind when he recalled the unpleasant skill of the mysterious forest man's fighting. He had been more than Philip's equal in swiftness and trickery; he was certainly Jean's.

Should he make some excuse and follow Jean's trail? He asked himself this question a dozen times without



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arriving at an answer. Then it occurred to him that Jean might have some definite reason for not returning to Adare House immediately. The longer he reasoned with himself the more confident he became that Croisset had been the victor. He knew Jean. Every advantage was on his side. He was as watchful as a lynx. It was impossible to conceive of his walking into a trap. So he determined to wait, at least until that night.

It was almost noon when Adare sent word by Metoosin asking Philip to rejoin him in the big room. A little later Josephine and her mother came in. Again Philip noticed that in the face of Adare's wife was that strange look which he had first observed in her room. The color of the morning had faded from her cheeks. The glow in her eyes was gone. Adare noted the change, and spoke to her tenderly.

Miriam and Josephine went ahead of them to the dining-room, and with his hand on Philip's arm John Adare whispered:

"Sometimes I am afraid, Philip. She changes so suddenly. This morning her cheeks and lips were red; her eyes were bright; she laughed—she was the old Miriam. And now! Can you tell me what it means? Is it some terrible malady which the doctors could not find?"

"No, it is not that." Philip felt his heart beat a little faster. Josephine had fallen a step behind her mother. She had heard Adare's words, and at Philip she had flung back a swift, frightened look. "It is not that," he repeated. "See how much better she looks to-day than yesterday! You understand, *mon père*, that oftentimes there comes a period of nervousness—of a sickness that is not sickness—in a woman's life. The winter will build her up."

The dinner passed too swiftly for Philip. They sat at a long table, and Josephine was opposite him. For a time he forgot the strain he was under, that he was playing a part in which he must not strike a single false key. Yet in another way he was glad when it came to an end, for it gave him an oppor-

tunity of speaking a few words with Josephine. Adare and Miriam went out ahead of them. At the door Philip held Josephine back.

"You are not going to leave me alone this afternoon?" he asked. "It is not quite fair, or safe, Josephine. I am traveling on thin ice. I——"

"You are doing splendidly, Philip," she protested. "To-morrow I will be different. Metoosin says there is a little half-breed girl very sick ten miles back in the forest, and you may go with me to visit her. There are reasons why I must be with my mother all of to-day. She has had a long journey and is worn out and nervous. Perhaps she will not want to appear at supper. If that is so, I will remain with her. But we will be together to-morrow—all day. Is that not recompense?"

SHE smiled up into his face as they followed Adare and his wife.

"You may help Metoosin with the dogs," she suggested. "I want you to be good friends—you and my beasts."

The hours that followed proved to be more than empty ones for Philip. Twice he went to the big room and found that Adare himself had yielded to the exhaustion of the long trip up from civilization, and was asleep. He accompanied Metoosin to the pit and assisted in chaining the dogs, but Metoosin was taciturn and uncommunicative. Josephine and her mother sent their excuses at supper time, and he sat down alone with Adare, who was delighted when he received word that the ladies had been sleeping most of the afternoon, and would join them a little later. His face clouded, however, when he spoke of Jean.

"It is unusual," he said. "Jean is very careful to leave word of his movements. Metoosin says it is possible he went after fresh caribou meat. But that is not so. His rifle is in his room. He left during the night or he would have spoken to us. I saw him as late as midnight, and he made no mention of it then. It has been snowing for two or three hours or I would send Metoosin on his trail."

"What possible cause for worry can you have?" asked Philip.

"Thoreau's cutthroats," replied Adare, a sudden fire in his eyes. "This winter may see—things happen. The force behind Thoreau's success in trade is whisky. That damnable stuff in his lure, or all the fur of this country would come to Adare House. If he could drive me out he would have nothing to fight against—his hands would be at the throat of every living soul in these regions, and all through whisky. Among those who were killed or turned up missing last winter were four of my best hunters. Twice Jean was shot at on the trail. I fear for him because he is my right arm."

When Philip left Adare he went to his room, put on heavier moccasins, and went quietly from the house. Three inches of fresh snow had fallen, and the air was thick with the white deluge. He hurried into the edge of the forest. A few minutes' futile searching convinced him of the impossibility of following the trail made by Jean and the man he had pursued. Through the thickening darkness he returned to Adare House.

Again Philip changed his moccasins, and waited for the expected word from Josephine or Adare. Half an hour passed, and during this time his mind became still more uneasy. He had hoped that Croisset was hanging in the edge of the forest, waiting for darkness. Each minute now added to his fear that all had not gone well with the half-breed. He paced up and down his room, smoking, and looking at his watch frequently. After a time he went to the window and tried to peer out into the white swirl of the night. The opening of his door turned him about. He expected to see Adare. Words that were on his lips froze in a moment of speechless horror.

He knew that it was Jean Croisset who stood before him. But it did not look like Jean. The half-breed's cap was gone. He was swaying, clutching at the partly opened door to support himself. His face was disfigured with blood; the front of his coat was spattered with frozen clots of it. His long

hair had fallen in rope-like strands over his eyes and frozen there. His lips were terrible.

"Good God!" gasped Philip.

He sprang forward and caught Jean as the half-breed staggered toward him. Jean's body hung a weight in his arms. The half-breed's legs gave way under him, but for a moment the clutch of his fingers on Philip's shoulder was vise-like.

"A little help, m'sieur," he gasped. "I am faint, sick. Whatever happens, let no one know of this to-night!"

With a rattling breath his head dropped upon Philip's arm.

CHAPTER XVII

SCARCELY had Jean uttered the few words that preceded his lapse into unconsciousness when Philip heard the laughing voice of Adare at the farther end of the hall. Heavy footsteps followed the voice. Impulse rather than reason urged him into action. He lowered Jean to the floor, sprang to the partly open door, closed it softly and locked it. He was not a moment too soon. A few steps more, and Adare was beating on the panel with his fist.

"What, ho!" he cried in his booming voice. "Josephine wants to know if you have forgotten her?"

Adare's hand was on the latch.

"I am—undressed," explained Philip desperately. "Offer a thousand apologies for me, *mon père*. I will finish my bath in a hurry!"

He dropped on his knees beside Jean as the master of Adare moved away from the door. A brief examination showed him where Croisset was hurt. The half-breed had received a scalp wound from which the blood had flowed down over his face and breast. Philip breathed easier when he discovered nothing beyond this. In a few minutes he had Jean partially stripped and on his bed. Jean opened his eyes as Philip bathed the blood from his face. He made an effort to rise, but Philip held him back.

"Not yet, Jean," he said.

Jean's glance shifted in a look of alarm toward the door.

"I must, m'sieur," he insisted. "It was the last few hundred yards that made me dizzy. I am better now. And there is no time to lose. I must get into my room—into other clothes!"

"We will not be interrupted," Philip assured him. "Is this your only hurt, Jean?"

"That alone, m'sieur. It was not bad until an hour ago. Then it broke out afresh, and made me so dizzy that with my last breath I stumbled into your room. The saints be praised that I managed to reach you!"

Philip left him, to return in a moment with a flask. Jean had pulled himself to a sitting posture on the side of the bed.

"Here's a drop of whisky, Jean. It will stir up your blood."

"*Mon Dieu*, it has been stirred up enough this night, *tanike*," smiled Jean feebly. "But it may give me voice, m'sieur. Will you get me fresh clothes? They are in my room—which is next to this on the right. I must be prepared for Josephine or le M'sieur before I talk."

Philip went to the door and opened it cautiously. He could hear voices coming from the room through which he had first entered Adare House. The hall was clear. He slipped out and moved swiftly to Jean's room. Five minutes later he reentered his own room with an armful of Jean's clothes. Already Croisset was something like himself. He quickly put on the garments Philip gave him, brushed the tangles from his hair, and called upon Philip to examine him to make sure he had left no spot of blood on his face or neck.

"You have the time?" he asked then.

Philip looked at his watch.

"It is eight o'clock."

"And I must see Josephine—alone—before ten," said Jean quickly. "You must arrange it, m'sieur. No one must know that I have returned until I see her. It is important. It means—"

"What?"

"The Great God alone can answer that," replied Jean in a strange voice. "Perhaps it will mean that to-morrow, or the next day, or the day after that,

M'sieur Weyman will know the secret we are keeping from him now, and will fight shoulder to shoulder with Jean Jacques Croisset in a fight that the wilderness will remember so long as there are tongues to tell of it!"

There was nothing of boastfulness or of excitement in his words. They were the words of a man who saw himself facing the final arbiter of things—a voice dead to visible hope, yet behind which there trembled a thing that made Philip face him with a new fire in his eyes.

"Why to-morrow or the next day?" he demanded. "Why shroud me in this damnable mystery any longer, Jean? If there is fighting to be done, let me fight!"

Jean's hollowed cheeks took on a flush.

"I would give my life if we two could go out and fight—as I want to fight," he said in a low, tense voice. "It would be worth your life and mine—that fight. It would be glorious. But I am a Catholic, m'sieur. I am a Catholic of the wilderness. And I have taken the most binding oath in the world. I have sworn by the sweet soul of my dead Iowaka to do only as Josephine tells me to do in this. Over her grave I swore that, with Josephine kneeling at my side. I have prayed that my Iowaka might come to me and tell me if I am right. But in this her voice has been silent. I have prayed Josephine to free me from my oath, and she has refused. I am afraid. I dare reveal nothing. But to-night—"

His voice sank to a whisper. His fingers gripped deep into the flesh of Philip's hand.

"To-night may mean—something," he went on, his voice filled with an excitement strange to him. "The fight is coming, m'sieur. We cannot much longer evade what we have been trying to evade. It is coming. And then, shoulder to shoulder we will fight!"

"And until then, I must wait?"

"Yes, you must wait, m'sieur."

Jean freed his hand and sat down in one of the chairs near the table. His eyes turned toward the window.



The half-breed was swaying, clutching at the partly opened door to support himself. His face was disfigured with blood.

"You need not fear another shot, m'sieur," he said quietly. "The man who fired that one at you will not fire again."

"You killed him."

Jean bowed his head without replying. The movement was neither of affirmation nor denial: "He will not fire again."

"It was more than one against one," persisted Philip. "Does your oath compel you to keep silent about that, too?"

There was a note of irritation in his voice which was almost a challenge to Jean. It did not prick the half-breed. He looked at Philip a moment before he replied.

"You are an unusual man, m'sieur," he said at last, as though he had been carefully measuring his words. "We have known each other only a few days, and yet it seems a long time. I had my suspicions of you back there. I thought it was Josephine's beauty you were after, and I have stood ready to kill you if I saw in you what I feared. But you have won, m'sieur. Josephine loves you. I have faith in you. And do you know why? It is because you have fought the fight of a strong man. It does not take great soul in a man to match knife against knife, or bullet against bullet. But to keep one's word, to play a hopeless part in the dark, to leap when the *numma wapew* is over the eyes and you are blind—that takes a man. And now, when Jean Jacques Croisset says for the first time that there is a ray of hope for you, where a few hours ago no hope existed, will you give me again your promise to play the part you have been asked to play? Will you once more give me your word that you will do this?"

"Hope!" Philip was at Jean's side in an instant. "Jean, what do you mean? Is it that you, even *you*—now

give me hope of some day possessing Josephine?"

Slowly Jean rose from his chair and faced Philip.

"I am part Cree, m'sieur," he said. "And in our Cree there is a saying that the God of all things, *Kisamunito*, the Great Spirit, often sits on high and laughs at the tricks which he plays on men. Perhaps this is one of those times. I am beginning to believe so. *Kisamunito* has begun to run our destinies, not ourselves. Yesterday we—our Josephine and I—had our hopes, our plans, our schemes well laid. To-night they no longer exist. Before the night is much older all that Josephine has done, all that she has made you promise, will count for nothing. After that—a matter of hours, perhaps of days—will come the great fight for you and me. Until then you must know nothing, must see nothing, must ask nothing. You must play your part as you have been playing it. And when the crash comes—"

"It will give Josephine to me?" cried Philip eagerly.

"I did not say that, m'sieur," corrected Jean quietly. "Out of fighting such as this, strange things may happen. And where things happen there is always hope. Is that not true?"

He moved to the door and listened. Quietly he opened it, and looked out into the hallway.

"The hall is clear," he whispered softly. "Go to Josephine. Tell her that she must arrange to see me within an hour. And if you care for that bit of hope I have shown you, let it happen without the knowledge of the Master of Adare. From this hour Jean Jacques Croisset sacrifices his soul. Make haste, m'sieur—and use caution!"

Without a word Philip went quietly out into the hall. Behind him Jean closed and locked the door.

The next installment of "God's Country—and the Woman" will be in the November Red Book, on the news-stands, October 23rd.



“And They’ll Want Their Beer To-day!”

By Clifford S. Raymond

Author of “A Return to Sam,” etc

ILLUSTRATED BY H. J. MOWAT

A little story of a big city is this: one of those blue-prints of life which Clifford Raymond can develop as no other writer has been able to develop them.

Oh, the young recruits are shaking
And they’ll want their beer to-day,
After hanging Danny Deever in the
morning.

WHEN Sidney Oulahan was a policeman in uniform, detailed at the criminal courts building, he took his lunch ordinarily at a German saloon restaurant across the street from the County jail. An interestingly stolid German by the name of Balweg owned the place. Mrs. Balweg was a good cook.

Oulahan was taken out of uniform

and given plain clothes for no good reason in the world except that he did not look like a detective. The Chief was an old sinner of not a few sorrows, but he had an instinct for effective police work, when it did not hurt some one who was not to be hurt, and every time he saw a couple of his detectives on the street he doubted the value of advertising.

After Oulahan had been made a detective, because he did not look like one, he continued to eat at Balweg’s “Idle Hour,” although Mr. Balweg made it embarrassing.

This excellent publican was a law-abiding citizen and very stern in the case of the wrong doer.

Mr. Balweg's propinquity to the place of punishment was profitable. Extreme punishment frequently was extraordinarily profitable. When an important hanging was had in the jail yard Mr. Balweg had to have an extra man behind the bar.

Then the street in front of his establishment would be filled with people feeding an appetite for horror by looking at the granite walls behind which justice was being executed on a delinquent.

Many hundreds of sensitive natures in the crowd thus assembled would be inclined to sociability by their study of the walls, and would resort to Mr. Balweg's with the idea emphasized that life was a very cosy, comfortable thing after all. The shrill wind of tragedy blew, and they hunted the fire-place of conviviality.

Now and then Mr. Balweg went across the street to the county jail and there used his acquaintance with the jailer for permission to visit a man condemned, or in a fair way to be condemned, for murder.

Mr. Balweg always carried the man two cigars and afterwards spoke of him as a "fine boy," concerning whom "it was a pity." Mr. Balweg always was very blithe about it, and his order for beer was always a dozen kegs larger against the appointed day.

MR. BALWEG'S "Idle Hour" was sophisticated in the matter of beef stew, pot roast with noodles, and broiled kidneys. Oulahan had a fondness for these dishes.

"If you're a detective now," said Mr. Balweg, and he said it as near "detectif" as it was possible without so saying it, "why don't you catch some murderers?"

A reasonable inquiry, surely, from a tax-payer and publican. Why did not Mr. Oulahan catch some murderers?

Mr. Balweg daily made inquiry. His mind was constant to the few subjects which interested it, constant if ponderous.

"There's enough of them," Mr. Bal-

weg continued, "and they aint in jail. You detectives didn't get the Carlogue murderers, or those fellows that did that job out on Sixty-first Street, or them Marble Park fellows, or the fellows in the Buck case. You don't get anybody. I'll bet you can't even catch that Cadolin gang, and they've done six murders known."

"You see," Oulahan suggested amiably, "I'm not a regular detective. I'm just in plain clothes."

"You're as good as the rest of them. They ought to get busy and make some news for the papers. I can't find no news in no papers these days. That Cadolin gang aint hard to catch, but they'll get away. —Get a napkin here for Mr. Oulahan. Louie, so he don't waste his noodles on his coat. —No, they aint hard to catch. One of them's got a false tooth. A false tooth aint solid. If you press on it, it gives. That's a clew."

"I didn't know it," said Oulahan. "I'll remember it."

"It's a clew. What are you going to have with your noodles?"

"A little dark."

"The light's the best."

"Make it a stein."

II

AT midnight Oulahan was on his way across the river into the heart of that section of hived humanity known politically as the "Great West Side."

He had been detailed with a superior person from headquarters, Detective Sergeant Smith, who was qualified by experience and self-esteem to think very lightly of Oulahan, and did.

Oulahan was not impressed by the profundity Detective Sergeant Smith wore as an outer garment. He and Smith were ordered to enter a lodging house and examine a man, reported by an excited fellow lodger as possibly if not probably a member of the hunted Cadolin gang of murderers.

Oulahan knew that a hundred attempts just such as this had been made. The police had overturned every box and barrel in the city, hunting for these murderers. It was worth a man's liberty to go unidentified to a lodging or board-

ing house and take a room. His next door neighbor instantly put him under suspicion and informed the police.

One of the gang, killing a policeman, had been shot, taken and had died of his wounds after making a statement which revealed the names of four confederates and the facts of five murders.

A woman had been killed in her house, a watchman in a railroad yard, a citizen on the street, a saloon-keeper in his saloon and a young man on his door step—these in addition to the policeman shot in a chance encounter with two members of the gang.

For three months the four men, known by photograph and history to every policeman in the city, had protected themselves against police activity.

Oulahen's reasoning on his present detail was very simple. If it had been a promising tip to headquarters the lieutenant would not have sent him, and he would not have sent Detective Sergeant Smith.

Oulahen was a better detective than Smith thought. He had discovered Smith, which would have astonished that thief-taker.

The lodging and boarding house they sought was in a street ill lighted.

"The key's under the steps by the basement door," said Smith. "Get it."

Oulahen found it on a nail where the informing lodger had put it. They let themselves in.

"Third floor south," said Smith. "Look out for holes in the carpet. Where's your gun?"

Smith had his in his hands, and as he struck a match to light the way upstairs he was as scenic as any great detective would care to be. Oulahen was impatient.

"I'll take care of my own gun," he whispered. "Don't drop yours. It might go off."

"You're a bone," said Smith. "Guys like you are what put the pension fund on the bum, giving the other fellow the benefit of the doubt."

They could hear the snores of a troubled sleeper; no other sound.

"Go on upstairs to the third floor, southeast room, and listen," Smith ordered. "If you hear a noise, break in

the door. I'll get the landlady up."

Oulahen was on the second landing when Smith tripped over an umbrella rack and fell heavily against a door. Oulahen ran up the next flight and quickly but softly to the southeast door.

Smith's fall had not been that of a feather. Oulahen heard, within the room at the door of which he listened, the sound of bare feet on carpetless floors.

"Who's there?" a woman's voice asked, softly, as if to confirm her own belief that no one was. Oulahen did not reply. Downstairs a door was opened and another woman's voice, with more apprehension, asked the same question. Oulahen heard the sound of bare feet going back from the door at which he listened, and a masculine voice within, inquiring but unintelligible.

"It's down stairs," he heard the woman say.

Smith had the landlady up. He had fallen against her door. Presently Oulahen heard them on the stairs. The woman carried a lamp. Thus discovered to view at the head of the stairs she was fat, annoyed and sleepy, in wrapper and slippers, with tousled hair in strings and at wild ends.

"Get them up," said Smith to Oulahen, who then knocked at the door. Again the sound of bare feet and a woman's inquiry.

"We want Mr. Williams on a matter of business," Oulahen replied. "Have him get up, please."

"What is your business?" the woman asked.

She opened the door two inches. Oulahen put his toe in the opening.

"Tell your husband to get up. Light your lamp and go to bed."

"What do you fellows want here?" asked the man in bed. "What are you trying to do?"

"Never mind. Get up."

"They're cops," said the woman.

"Why didn't you say so before?" Mr. Williams demanded angrily. "Light the lamp, Sallie, and get to bed while I see what these boobs want."

OULAHEN, Smith and the landlady entered the room. It had the distressed appearance of a thing caught by

unexpected lamplight in disarray. All its disorder flared out. There was a faded carpet, an iron bed, three chairs, a trunk, and a small table on which were four empty beer bottles and a plate with a half eaten sandwich and some crumbs of bread. The woman, with her hair falling limp over her shoulders, sat in the bed hugging the covers to her knees. The man stood awkwardly beside it but faced his inquisitors indifferently.

"So this is the kind of a house you

what you're doing here?" he asked.

Smith had been looking at him as if he were trying to guess his weight.

"What's your trade, Williams?" he asked.

"Machinist."

"Working?"

"Haven't been for four months. Going to work Monday."

"Got a card?"

"Sure."

Williams walked over to the chair on



Mr. Williams turned his attention to the policemen. "I wish you coppers would tell me what you're doing here?" he asked.

keep, is it?" he asked of the landlady. "A man can't sleep in his own room in peace."

"Never mind about the house," said she. "You get through with these men, and then the house is through with you. Your room is wanted. We don't need boarders that bring the police down on us at this time of night."

Mr. Williams turned his attention to the policemen.

"I wish you coppers would tell me

which his coat hung and from the inner pocket produced a union card. Smith examined it.

"That's all right," he said. "How long have you lived here?"

"Two weeks."

"Where did you live before?"

"Rockwell Street—1124 Rockwell Street."

"Anybody there that could identify you?"

"Any of the fellows in McGuire's sa-

loon — McGuire, Tom Lot, Sol Mensheimer, his bartenders."

"Have you a telephone, madam?" Smith asked the landlady.

"No," she said testily.

"Say," said Williams, "I'm on to you fellows. You think I'm Cicotte of the Cadolin gang."

"Well, what if we do?" Smith asked. "You haven't proved you aren't yet."

"Oh, nothing," said Williams, "only you're kind of late in getting around. There was a bunch of yaps from some newspaper and a couple of Big Dicks from the South Side here last week. That's what makes the old lady so sore. I wish I knew who was steering you fellows on to me."

"Yes, and I aint going to stand it any longer," said the landlady with decision. "You may be all right, Mr. Williams, but I don't want roomers so popular with the police. I'm a hard-working woman, and I've got to have my sleep. I can't be getting up at all times of the night because the police think you're a murderer. I'll thank you to let me have this room to-morrow."

"Have other police officers been here?" Smith asked.

"They have," said the landlady austere.

Oulahan had been looking at Mrs. Williams, who, sitting in bed holding her knees in her arms, was watching Williams steadily. She was very quiet, but her mouth was slightly open and her appearance was one of suspense. Oulahan thought there was the mark of a bruise on her cheek.

Unaccountably, as Smith's examination of Williams fell to pieces, Oulahan remembered Mr. Balweg and his "clew."

"Open your mouth, Williams," he said approaching the man. Williams grinned and showed his teeth. Oulahan held his chin and jabbed the incisors with a rigid thumb. All were firm.

"What do you think you're doing, Oulahan?" Smith asked with contempt.

"One of that gang has a false tooth," Oulahan explained with a show of embarrassment.

The woman in bed startled them all with a gasping laugh.

"He thinks you're Hedderstrom, Ed."

she cried. "Hedderstrom's on the floor above. This is Cicotte. Don't let him get me."

Oulahan grabbed the man and threw him to the floor. Smith handcuffed him. The landlady gave a whimpering little cry. The woman in bed laughed at the man now sitting on the floor.

"I'll show you," she said. "I'll show you."

"This dame's crazy," the man said quietly to Oulahan.

"All right," said Oulahan, "just don't you go crazy too. You keep your mouth shut, and you too, Mrs. Williams, or whatever your name is."

"Come with me," Smith said, taking the landlady by the wrist and hurrying her towards the door. "Show me this other fellow's room."

He dragged her after him; and Oulahan, left in charge of the man and the woman, watched them while he waited for sounds from above.

For a moment there were none—then the smash of a door giving way.

"Quit it, quit it," he heard Smith say. "You're up against it, Hedderstrom."

Presently a man in night clothes, closely followed by Smith, appeared in the doorway. The man was scowling and puzzled. Fright did not get him until he saw Cicotte in handcuffs. Then he cried out as if he were just awakening. His movement backwards was one of unthinking impulse, but the sergeant with a quick shove sent him sprawling at the feet of Cicotte, who looked at him and laughed.

III

MR. BALWEG'S admiration of Oulahan's achievement as a detective was even a greater embarrassment to the enjoyment of Thueringer sausage *mit* lentils than his scorn of the detective force had been.

Mr. Balweg made Oulahan's meal a triumph. He and Louie, his man-servant, met the distinguished guest at the door; Louie took his hat; Louie dusted his chair; Mr. Balweg gave him the menu; Mr. Balweg took his order, shouting it down the tube by the beer taps to Mrs. Balweg in the basement kitchen.

"One spare-ribs, Minnie; make 'em juicy, Minnie, and lots of kebbage; for Mr. Oulahan, Minnie, who caught the murderers."

Much of the time Mr. Balweg was content to rest his arms on his bar and stare across it at Oulahan, but this contentment he spiced occasionally by introducing other guests to the great detective.

He came portentously with one or more.

"Shake hands with Mr. Oulahan. Mr. Oulahan caught them Cadolin gang murderers. He caught two, and then the police got the other two. They're over there now. They're going to be tried next month."

Mr. Balweg would jerk his thumb in the direction of the County jail and retire behind his bar, leaving Oulahan and the other victims of the Balwegian sense of public duty to extricate themselves from each other in the best fashion they could. If Mrs. Balweg had not been so good a cook, Oulahan would have been driven from the "Idle Hour."

The four thugs with whom society had caught up, Cadolin, Cicotte, Hedderstrom and a young fellow named Parke, had been going through experiences not all of which were unpleasant. The police, with the men safely in their hands, allowed them their moment of strut and bravado. They talked at large to reporters. They were photographed. Two had wives, who were photographed. One had an infant, which was photographed. The other wife borrowed an infant that the purposes of sob journalism might be served.

Thus the four thugs made a stir; sentimentalism was racked, sanity was vexed. The thugs then had the starch of their strut taken out of them by two months in jail and by their hopeless trial. A sentence to death found two of them blubbing, one stolid and indifferent, and the fourth shaken but determined to hold together.

Then society began to question the larger justice of its own contemplated act, the justice behind the law, and to hunt for its measure of responsibility behind these young men and for the rule of its right to take life for life.

Society does its hangings cheerfully by not thinking of them. The sheriff and the jailer may go home sick, but society, reading a dozen lines that John Jones was executed for the murder of William Smith, is austere rejoiced. When society's imagination works, its indifference disappears. It is startled.

Four executions on one day, said many reasonable folk, would be a brutal work of permitted but not justified vengeance. Petitions were sent to the Governor for commutation of sentence, and there was much ado and much stir.

DURING this unrest Mr. Balweg was unusually vexed. The petitions touched his ideas of good citizenship sorely. They tried his soul. Murder was murder, said he, and long-haired men and short-haired women filled him with dismay.

"They'll be saying that burglary is stylish next, that's what they will," said Mr. Balweg to Oulahan. "It isn't in the Bible and it isn't in the law. They want to make these fellows Sunday-school superintendents. That's the way with these temperance fanatics. If I didn't have my front door locked and the blinds up at one o'clock they'd say 'Hang Balweg.' Sure they would. That's them fanatics. But if I'd gone out and killed twelve men they'd say: 'Don't hang Balweg. Balweg is a good man, only he didn't have any chance. His heredity was against him and his environment didn't do him any good. We are to blame, brothers, we are all to blame. We didn't look after Brother Balweg the way we ought to.' Now wouldn't it make you sick?"

Mr. Balweg showed what suffering it caused him mentally.

"But these fellows that say they shouldn't all be hung at once," he said, "—they've got some sense. These fellows ought to be hung on different days, every day for a week, or every Friday for a month. A man that's going to be hung has got some rights. He's got a right to have a day all to himself."

"If there were four different hangings there probably would be four different crowds," Oulahan suggested.

"I'm against it for more than busi-



Mrs. Balweg came hurriedly. "Another stroke," she cried, looking at the helpless publican. "Get a doctor, please, mister, quick."

ness reasons," said Mr. Balweg. "although it makes a good deal of difference to me, and I'm a tax-payer and am entitled to some consideration. It aint humanity—and it aint good business. I'm a tax-payer and I'm going to get a lawyer make me a petition to have it on different days. It's only human."

Mr. Balweg paid an attorney ten dollars for the writing of a petition to His Excellency, the Governor, requesting in the name of humanity that the executions of the four miserable young men be serial.

This petition, signed by Gottlieb Balweg, and none other, went to the Governor. Mr. Balweg had hoped to strengthen his plea by obtaining thereto the signatures of the four miserable young men but found them wholly devoted to the hope that the petition for commutation of sentence might win approval.

SEVERAL days after he had dispatched the petition, he received a letter from the Governor's office ac-

knowledging the receipt of his communication and promising for it due consideration. Balweg was exalted by hope. In this great moment of his life there was nothing chill in the cold forms of executive correspondence. Mr. Balweg had a letter from the Governor, and as a publican he was on a pinnacle.

The fall therefrom was mighty. In a week's time Mr. Balweg was honored again. "The Governor had given consideration to his petition and regretted to advise him of the impossibility of complying with the request therein stated."

To the reasonable persons petitioning for a commutation of sentence a similar reply was made. The Governor, a dour man, refused to interfere in any manner with the execution of sentence.

Mr. Balweg did not yield at once to the solace of the thought that the impious attempt to subvert the law utterly had failed along with his reasonable request but for a time filled the "Idle Hour" with lamentations.

"It aint human," he said dejectedly even after the edge of his sorrow had

been dulled. "I'm the only saloon on this side of the jail, and I can't handle the crowd. There's a lot of business going to waste."

Mr. Balweg the publican was bitter, but morose reflection was not allowed to interfere with sound business judgment. He gave orders for an unprecedented amount of beer and made arrangements for two bartenders to help him meet the emergency.

On the morning of the execution, Oulahan, under orders to look for criminals wanted at headquarters in the crowd about the jail, found the outer fringe of this morbid mass two blocks from the jail corner.

From there as far as he could see over the heads it was an almost immovable jam with a head projecting here and there where a forethoughtful citizen had brought a box to stand on. The police had given up the attempts to keep a vehicle path open; in the middle of the block were several drays stalled to show the impenetrability of the crowd.

Oulahan went to another street in which there was a street-car line. This had a lane as wide as the tracks open through it, and by that lane he could approach the jail by following the slowly moving cars.

AS Oulahan came near the jail corner he saw that the crowd was in motion, swaying back and forward. A police line held it twenty feet from the corner, and the unfortunates in its front row took the police shoves in their stomachs and were pressed forward by the eager persons jammed up behind them. All around the jail the police line extended.

The jail was isolated. There was no person in the streets surrounding it. Within the police lines there was a zone of silence, swept clean and quiet.

In this zone, across the street from the jail gate, stood the "Idle Hour," establishment of Mr. G. Balweg, Fine Beer and Wines, more idle than it ever had been. A thousand thirsty souls might look at it, but none could attain it.

Oulahan saw the plight of Balweg the publican, and amused, went through the line and up the street towards the

"Idle Hour" to see how it's proprietor withstood this buffet of an ironic fate.

The door of the "Idle Hour" stood open. The weather was cold but the door stood open. Mr. Balweg in his shirt-sleeves sat just inside of it. There was no one else in the place.

The two bartenders hired to meet an emergency were not behind the bar, and it was evident either that before the calamity bowled the publican over completely he had dismissed them, or that they had not been able to get through the police line.

If Mr. Balweg had suffered a great deal, nature had given him an opiate. He was apathetic. He looked at Oulahan wonderingly, as if trying to identify him. This he did with an effort.

"It's Mr. Oulahan, who caught the murderers," he said. "Make 'em juicy, Minnie, for Mr. Oulahan."

Then he closed his eyes. When Oulahan shook him he opened them and made a fresh effort to identify his caller.

"Make 'em juicy, Minnie," he said.

Oulahan closed the door, and went behind the bar to the tube by the beer taps, and whistled down it for Mrs. Balweg.

"Your husband's not well," he called down. "You'd better come up."

Mrs. Balweg came hurriedly by the stairs at the end of the bar.

"Another stroke," she cried, looking at the helpless publican. "Get a doctor, plees, mister, quick."

"That was the fellow that petitioned the Governor to have four hangings on four different days, wasn't it?" the lieutenant asked when Oulahan explained that he was named as pall bearer.

"Yes, and he was also the fellow that gave me the tip we caught them on. He told me to remember that one had a false tooth which wouldn't be as solid as the rest. When I tried Cicotte's teeth the woman squealed on him. That's what spilled the beans for them."

"All right, Sid," said the lieutenant. "Take a half day off for the funeral, but the next time you want to find a guy with a false tooth, look for it. Don't punch it. They're just as solid as the others."

A Small-Town Soul

By Walter Jones

Author of "The 'Younger Set'
in Pembina," etc.

William Van Dresser



ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM VANDRESSER

HE tried his best to make the girls think he was devilish, but the best he got was a laugh. And the laugh was tragedy to that small town soul of his.

I USED to say to myself that it didn't matter, used to say it as I fronted unflinchingly the image the cracked mirror gave back in my little dormer bed-room out home; but now I know that it does, and always has, and always will. How could it help but matter, that disillusioning presentment of plainness? Does anyone fancy that looks don't count in a man? that personality is a myth? What a sophistry! There isn't a male living but covets a pair of shoulders that will bring him odds in a fight, or a cleft chin or some "damned magic" about his eyes that'll put him across with the women! Scoff, you sons of Anak, you Apollos! But the rest of us, we know what we haven't got.

We are pretty slow, most of us, about making entries upon the debit side of the ledger of life. Yet I was only a high-school junior of sixteen when I got my first bitter perspective of myself. It was after session one April afternoon. The boys were getting up a ball game on the playground diamond. I had gone in-

side for a forgotten catcher's mitt. The exploring hand in my desk was arrested by voices in the girls' cloak-room near by.

"Who's taking you to the dance Thursday, Geraldine?" one of them was saying.

And the other replied, "I don't know for sure, honey. Tom Shannon promised to come down from Fort Wayne. And I've got a date with Ed for to-night. I expect he'll ask me. If he don't, I can always fall back on—you know who." Geraldine jangled her bracelets complacently. "I guess I've got that goop where he'll feed out of my hand, anyway."

"Why, Geraldine, you oughtn't to talk so about Stanley! He's a *good* kid, even if he is homely."

"Martha, you're a dear, but you don't know anything about men. Lend me your note-book, will you? I'm back on my algebra for to-morrow."

I tip-toed cautiously from the study-room; but I did not return to the ball-field. Fleeing furiously out the nearest country road, I threw myself down on

the shores of the old "crab pond," buried my burning cheeks in the damp spring turf, and let the shame and hurt of it all surge through me. For I was Stanley; Geraldine was the goddess of my shrine; and the other girl, who had patronized me so pityingly, was Martha, plain Martha Huggins, that wore her scant hair in a hazel-nut, got ninety-eight in deportment, and at class picnics was i m m e m o r i a l l y left stranded with the lunch in the pavilion. And only two days previous, Geraldine had confided that she would "just adore" to go with me to the dance, if she were in town and "nothing came up" at home.

As I squirmed there on the grass, my awakened brain footed up against Geraldine a big total of social misadventures. I remembered that whenever I asked her to go anywhere, she would never tell me "for sure;" that she frequently developed after-supper headaches on the evenings when I was scheduled to call; that once she had given me only the second encore of a dance down opposite my name on her card.

Light began to filter also upon my status with the rest of "the crowd." Was it accidental that on Monday mornings I never discovered a half-pound of fudges in my desk with a scented feminine note under the lid? How happened it that, returning from class rackets, I could get no further than my partner's front steps, when the moon revealed other porch hammocks over-weighted? Why did the boys never press me to stay over for the owl car on their weekly "bats" to the city?

Stray sentences overheard in a high-school cloak-room! Yet they gave me a dread clue that somehow I was different from the world I moved in. But how? Why? Poor Martha had popped the cat



I was only a high-school junior when I got my first bitter perspective in my desk was arrested by voices in the girls' cloak-room. "Who's

straight out of the bag? Homely. Good!

Was I so homely? Yes, I had suspected it. But it isn't the sort of a suspicion one encourages unnecessarily. I had stifled it easily with the assurance that I would "get by in the bunch." And already a trundle-bed Venus was checking it up against me! I made immediate resolve to alter the part in my hair, develop an ogle and a swagger, and trim myself with the doggiest clothes I could purchase.

But it was that odious adjective *good* that cut the deepest. Who wants to be good at sixteen? Nobody! At thirty, perhaps. But there are so many



of myself. I had gone inside for a forgotten catcher's mitt. The exploring hand taking you to the dance Thursday, Geraldine?" one of them was saying.

more interesting things that come first. And I had never meant to be good. I was an unwitting victim to virtue. My unfortunate reputation had evidently come about because I had never been caught shooting spitballs or putting cheese on the vestibule radiators; because I had succumbed too frequently to the fatal fascinations of history and the languages; because I was not allowed to play pedro for prizes; had never tried to kiss Daisy Sanger; because, worst of all, I wore glasses and tended the library of the Methodist Sunday school.

The indictment was overwhelming. Yet there was hope of reform. I rolled

over on my back and grudgingly permitted the consolation of the warm spring sun as I planned an immediate campaign of cigarettes and lurid language, amorous adventures and unopened text-books. When I left the "crab pond" an hour later, I still hated myself, Geraldine,—what man ever forgets the first thrust of feminine perfidy? —Martha, my pious parents, God—for dropping me improperly finished into an unappreciative world—and most of all that opprobrious epithet—*good!*

I was of several minds about Thursday. Should I develop a cowardly sore toe? or go stag? or throw Geraldine over for another girl? She settled my indecision by a 'phone message that a Mr. Shannon from Fort Wayne was visiting her brother; she didn't like him,

really—he was so much older—but he seemed very anxious to go to the dance; she'd already asked two girls for him that couldn't accept—didn't I see what a dreadfully embarrassing position it placed her in? And if—

I saw, released her coldly, and determined to storm the dance on a platform of fashion and bravado. After two days spent over my sartorial effects, I had the misfortune to encounter my father in the front hall on the fateful evening. One glance at my gray-suede-topped patent leathers, fancy waistcoat, and ultramarine tie, and he said severely: "Go back to your room, Stanley, and

take off those shoes and that barkeeper's vest. And the next time you want ten dollars for clothes, earn it."

This catastrophe put it up to my conduct to atone for my despoiled wardrobe. I engaged three dances with Margie Stanwood, Geraldine's dearest enemy, camped about the punch bowl, and embraced my partners desperately in the new "Chicago clutch." But these manœuvres impressed nobody; Geraldine refused to be piqued; and throughout the evening I was uncomfortably conscious of Martha's condoling eyes upon me. She knew me for a jilted swain. Out of a certain chivalrous pity I had always sought her for a single waltz. Now the shoe was on the other foot. But not to ask her, I decided, would be too craven. As we stepped onto the floor, her fingers pressed mine and she murmured, with averted face, "Stanley, I know about Geraldine, and I think it's simply *perfidious* the way she's treated you!" And at that moment, when I could have strangled her, I found my own fingers responding involuntarily to the stimulus of sympathy with which even the most unattractive Venus knows how to charge the Vulcan of her species.

We had scarcely circled the hall when—merciful heaven!—the music slowed into the strains of "Home, Sweet Home." Trapped! In the middle of the room—the last dance—with the biggest "detrital" in the class, I took a step away and—no, it was too cruel—I couldn't do it. But I swallowed several times before I managed, "May I see you home, Miss Huggins?"

On the way we talked about those bothersome problems in choice and chance, whether euchre was more fun than pedro, should the class have gold pins or enamel. And as we advanced up the moon-lit, maple-shaded street, it swept over me suddenly that this was not the way young Launcelots talked to their Guineveres, not the way Tom Shannon was talking to Geraldine now. Jealousy is an excellent mistress for backward intuitions. The knowledge infuriated me, completed the downfall of my social cosmos; and with this cataclysm I awoke to certain primordial promptings that—

But we had reached Martha's doorstep. There was a moment of awkward silence; then, with a blush that penetrated even the darkness, she blurted out, "Do you like chocolate fudge, Stanley, or panouchi?"

Next Monday morning it happened—the inevitable: in my desk a be-ribboned box of bon bons with a tiny note in Martha's pudgy hand. I was furious—wished the floor might open up and drop me through to China, debated boldly throwing it out the window. But twice during the first study period her eyes found mine with a peculiar inwardness that said, "There's something between us, something nobody else is in on." There was. And then, it was my first box of fudges! I weakened—passed it around at recess, stood up under the jollying of "the crowd," even winked yum-yum-ily at Martha. But in my depth of depths seethed cuss-words that would shame a stevedore!

As the dance had proved such a fiasco, I proceeded at once to the rest of my self-reform program. I swaggered jauntily into Eddie's pool-room and demanded a box of cigarettes. Eddie twitched his loose mouth into an aggravating grimace. "We don't sell cigarettes to minors," he observed virtuously, retiring behind a billiard table. . . . I invited myself boldly into the rowdy gang that gathered evenings about the high-school steps, until I observed that my arrival had become the signal for a subtle shifting of the conversation and a gradual scattering of the clan, with the significant comment, "See you later, Steve!" Three days I flunked Latin and history. And the succeeding Sabbath I stood out on Sunday-school. My mother plied me with pills and panaceas, and a council with the family physician proclaimed solemnly that overstudy had reduced me to the edge of a nervous breakdown!

As a last desperate resort there remained—Daisy Sauger. After forty-eight hours of damp palms and fluctuating courage, I gave a tremulous whistle under her tenement window. She came to the door in a slovenly negligée: "Hullo, kiddo," I managed. "Come on downtown to the band concert." She shot me the

look of a barkeeper's Annie invited to call on the preacher's lady. But she was a soft thing that followed the lines of easiest acquiescence, and, after a little persuasion, she went back into the house to put on a flappy hat and a peekaboo waist. As we crossed the first curb, she eluded a clumsy effort to link my arm in hers—not an encouraging omen. Still, the night was young. A block from the public square I—I, to whom ginger pop was debauchery!—plunged panicily: "Let's go into Old Vienna for a feed."

Daisy turned sharply, stared at me an instant, then burst into a thin, shrill laugh that rings yet in my ears. "You doing this on a bet? What d'you think —'t I want to get the correction officer onto me for robbing a Bible-class?" She put a not unkindly hand on my arm. "Run on home to bed. There's a friend of mine getting off the interurban. I got to speak to him. Excuse me."

And she left me there, staring blankly at the grimy green panes of our local place of carousal.

Unhappy Stanley! Will the villainy of virtue always pursue you? I stumbled home, cowed into a temporary acceptance of my fate. A month ago I had been a happy, healthy, shouting body; now I was a self-conscious, tortured, misprized soul, consigned to Marthas, mollycoddles, and solitary meanderings along the river bank.

The term passed in a purgatory of fancied slights and wounded sensibilities; but a summer of baseball and Saturdays in my father's hardware store restored me to a normal outlook on my young life. By the time school reopened an illuminating light had burst upon me: I was simply the victim of provincialism. I admitted candidly to myself that I had really never thought much of my home-town, had always suspected the limitations of its citizens. My parents were excellent people, of course, but narrow minded. My classmates seldom progressed beyond teachers' normals or agricultural schools. Instead of my not being up to my environment, my environment was not up to me.

I knew myself to be destined for an Eastern university. A twelve-month more, and I should shake the natal dust

from my feet—perhaps forever. Then we should see what we should see. Meanwhile I compressed my every sigh of self-pity into an inward sneer of superiority.

The year slipped by as youthful years will. I graduated—valedictorian; delivered a lugubrious oration on "Et Tu, Brute?" which, to my sorrow, no one suspected of a personal application; and the following September departed on the Atlantic Limited with a new dresser trunk, a condition in Greek prose-composition, four fancy waistcoats, and my vision set on a starry spot in the heavens of collegiate popularity. Gram-paw Byers, the local sage, was at the depot. He shook his head at me wisely. "What are you going to college for, huh? It wont get you nothing. You're a small-town size. Better stay home and work for your daddy." I laughed in his face.

My train was met at the station by a band of ingratiating sophomores, and I was pledged into the fraternity that had been my high school principal's. For a semester or two, university life promised all I had anticipated; then it began slowly to be borne in upon me that I had mistaken the excitement of adjusting myself to my new surroundings for an entry ticket into the real arena of goodfellowship.

I was being constantly appointed to committees that meant much labor and no glory. Friends I had; but theirs was an intellectual companionship that found communion in discussion of Nietzsche, relaxation in a stroll or a silent rubber of bridge. Nobody ever slapped me on the back with have-one-on-me cordiality; no noisy gang ever routed me out at midnight for a lunch-cart feed. At fraternity dances I could produce no key to unlock the door of cosy-corner conversation.

In the college world I was occupying the same unenviable position I had occupied in the high-school world. And the realization was surely a cataclysm. But this time I did not indulge in emotional blind staggers. I shut my study door upon sounds of rag-time and friendly rough-house and went over the thing calmly. Still homely? Yes—though with mitigations. In four semes-

ters even the crassest freshman may learn the intricacies of peg-tops and correct collars. And good? Undoubtedly—despite a briar and occasional cuss-words. Yet all about me men who did not permit themselves even these indulgences were being initiated into the company of the elect. The old indictments still held; and soon enough I found another.

Two years I had gone out for the college debating team. At the second trials, after the most complete preparation and rehearsal, I made only a place as an alternate. In my first stress of disappointment I sought the professor of public speaking under whom I had coached. "Just where did I fall down in my argument, Professor?" I asked him.

He swung around slowly in his classroom chair. "You didn't fall down on your argument, my boy. Yours was the most logical debate given, the best written, and the clearest delivered; but—you were not in it; there was no personality; you did not get *yourself* across." Finally, "Thank you," I said. I am afraid somewhat bitterly. "You have told me something I needed very much to know about myself."

He tried to console me. "Another team will be chosen next year. If you go out again, I am sure—"

"No."—I shook my head.—"I shan't go out again. It wasn't just a question about the debate, but about the entire social relation of my life. Is there, Professor?"—I forced it out doggedly—"anything I can do for this—this inability to get myself across?"

He crossed the recitation room and rested his hand upon my shoulder. "Why, I—I don't know." He considered. "Personality is a terribly elusive thing. I should advise this: try to forget what I have just said to you; lose yourself in your work; read the most stimulating books; know the most stimulating people; think the most stimulating thoughts—"

"But," I burst in, "it is the most stimulating thoughts about the most stimulating books that I want to tell to the most stimulating people. And if I don't know them, how can I—"

He gestured in gentle deprecation.

"Well, anyway," he said, "try, at least till you are thirty, to cultivate the human touch; and, by that time, even if you don't succeed, you will have developed within yourself other resources that will make your life worth while."

I thanked him—and all night long stalked the hard white ribbon of a country road, smoking black cigars *ad nauseam*. At dawn I crawled into my bed with the teeth-gritted resolve, "I'll try." Yet I saw no way to try except to keep on as I had, extending a tentative hand of camaraderie; but college worlds are not inquisitive, and I was on the point of withdrawing to a "plugger's" cave of hermitage, when—Elsie came.

Always, at the psychological moment, a woman! Have they been my own peculiar weakness? Is the pathway of every fellow's life lustered by their benignant or baleful stars? Or was it simply that, as a victim of *mépris*, I felt only a woman could understand and sympathize?

We met at a fraternity reception. For her it must have been a moment of condescension; for me it was a moment of emprise, when I assured myself, "No more Marthas for you, Vera Vere de Vere—or nobody." She hailed from New York, which dazzled my provincial soul. When our last dance of the evening was over, I faltered an invitation to our glee club concert. She came back with a "bid" to her class play. One engagement led to another. I encountered Harvard, Williams, Dartmouth men upon her doorstep; yet her refusals were infrequent, her appointments with me many. I invested in an opera hat, a Prince Albert coat, chamois gloves, and set out upon the primrose path of beau-dom. In the mornings I got up to polish the sun. For hours I swung Indian clubs out of sheer joy. Quantitative analysis was tit-a-tat-to for me.

It is all years past now, and I understand—and forgive. That's something, isn't it, to forgive the woman who has broken your heart? Mine wasn't a rare heart—I haven't even that satisfaction—and Elsie wasn't a rare heart-breaker. Simply one of a usual type in the world to which I aspired: a collector of men—of all sorts and eras. She would have

made soulful eyes at Charon—to see if she could delay his barque; have hypnotized a Dyak—to elude the clutches of his primitive embrace; seduced a missionary from his chapel—to test the triumph of love over faith. An amatory chameleon! And the color scheme she chose for me was sympathy.

It isn't easy to set down how, in a thousand tints, she spread its pigments over my philogynist's soul; but here's an instance: We were driving one autumn afternoon. I had just lost an important class election. When she had wormed my bitterness out of me, she laid her hand on my coat-sleeve and said gently, "Dear boy, you mustn't mind. College elections are so *puerile*, anyway. This doesn't signify that you aren't going to succeed in *life*. And you still have your studies—and your friends."

Crude work? No, because she had eyes that looked through and drew you, hair that brushed yours in tantalizing tendrils, a tête-à-tête voice that thrilled you with delightful implications. Poor Martha! While she was sorting her cards, Elsie could play a lone hand on the deal of sympathy.

Senior year slipped by with Stanley in the clouds. Commencement came. I was not sorry. My course had given me the ability to make a living among the cultured pursuits. One post-graduate year at Columbia—then whatever teaching my capabilities commanded. But in all besides vocational aspects my alma mater had failed me. I was leaving nothing I should miss—except Elsie. And her I dared hope sometime to regain permanently.

Four years had passed upon my stern resolve to shake the natal dust from my feet. The clerkship in a Long Island summer hotel I had gained for my freshman vacation was held open for me each succeeding season. Winter recesses I remained in New England. Only once had I been back home, in the late February of sophomore year, upon the occasion of an illness of my father's.

Five interminable days I tarried in coventry. On the street I was discomfited by inquisitive glances that said, "Look at the big stiff! He's been East to a swell school, and what's it got him?"

Sunday I sat through a sixty-minute sermon whose theology was twenty years out of date. The pews were uncushioned. Mrs. Amos Persing still wore her seal-skin circular. Addie Cline still nourished a satin rose on her bosom and executed Nevin. Geraldine had outgrown religion. Martha I avoided.

But the last night, my mother pressed me into a call at the Huggins home. It was a calamitous occasion. Martha's sitting-room was a junk-shop of mail-order furniture, her person as unimpressing as ever. Her gown, two years behind the seaboard fashion, was fur-belowed intricately; through her thin hair she had drawn an incongruous pink ribbon. The horrible thought overcame me that she was making a last desperate throw of the connubial dice. There was not a thread of interest upon which we could hang even a glass-bead of conversation. I had not informed her of my activities. She dared not broach high-school topics without unflattering implications. For half an hour I blushed across the abyss; then I fled incontinently. *Valc*, Martha! *valc*, Main Street! *valc* the tank-town portals of my youth—this time forever, *valc*!

Elsie was exiled for the summer to a quiet Maine resort with her semi-invalid mother. With the financial security of three profitably spent vacations, I suggested the possibility of passing a week or two at a hotel in her vicinity. The proposition meeting with her approval, I invested in a pair of flannel trousers, a Panama hat, an eight-dollar tennis racket, and blithely boarded the Portland boat from Boston. Upon reaching the field of action, however, I found other entries in the persons of a Cuban planter's son, a Yale swimming instructor, and a dancing man from Asheville. To hold my own with these, I leased an ocean-going power boat and dusted my ballroom pumps.

It was a beatific summer. Apparently Elsie played a fair field and no favors. I lingered on from two weeks to ten, in an Elysian idyl, troubled only by occasionally detected languishing glances from the Cuban or new steps from the repertory of the dancing man. Chronology favored me. I out-stayed the others



"Nobody ever kissed me like that," she murmured, as I released her from a first embrace. Even in my ecstatic moment it seemed a strange phrase, until she supplemented it softly, "One's family's kisses aren't at all like one's lover's, are they?"

and, on the eve of my departure, led Elsie tremulously to the shelter of a pine-scented cliff.... "Nobody ever kissed me like that," she murmured, as I released her from a first embrace. Even in my ecstatic moment it seemed a strange phrase, until she supplemented it softly. "One's family's kisses aren't at all like one's lover's, are they?"

I sent her a resplendent ring from Portland and went on to New York to matriculate at the university. Shall I ever forget that first night in Manhattan? After inspecting my new quarters I walked down Fifth Avenue, my chest expanded to a Cæsar's girth. I had emerged from traotane obscurity and was marching on Rome at last. No hardware for you, Stanley! But a seat in the halls of learning. For a bride no small-town silly! But a cultured woman of society. Ah, Elsie! The baffling wonder of her regard I did not question. What lover ever does?—except vaguely. The union of opposites, perhaps. Souls *rediviva*, that were mated a thousand years ago. The potter's finer clay!—Sentimental, and a fool? Yes. But every man knows one hour in which he is a superman, if only to himself. That was mine. Let me have it; it was short.

Within ten days after my fiancée's return to town I saw that something was wrong. The Elsie of a democratic college, the Elsie of the woods and waves, was not the Elsie of Manhattan. Her New York life was panoplied with a hundred ties I could not understand, a hundred interests I could not share. I did not fit into her program of shopping and theatres, dances and teas. The men she knew were wealthier than I, better groomed, spoke in a flippant give-and-take my slow tongue could not emulate. It was not that she was less agreeable; but I detected half-suppressed gestures, conversational shifts, critical puckerings of the eyebrows, that warned me I was presenting an obtuse angle toward her life.

This exasperating, intangible friction between us came to a focus one evening after a box-party at the opera. "Elsie," I protested, on the way home, "I wish you wouldn't see any more of Waldo Pater than you can help."

"What a strange request!" She looked at me oddly. "Why?"

"Because I—I don't believe he's the sort of fellow you'd care to know."

"Aren't you presuming on your rights over my acquaintance, Stanley, dear? I've always found Mr. Pater charming; and he must be a gentleman, or the Everalls wouldn't have invited him to-night."

"He may be a gentleman; but he isn't a man. He is seen about too frequently with chorus girls. Even his chapter whispers about him at fraternity smokers."

Elsie laughed. "Really, Stanley, you amuse me. Waldo Pater is a gentleman; and I'm sure a gentleman couldn't do anything objectionable. If you mean the way he touched my shoulder to-night, that was, of course, an accident. Please remember New York is New York, and don't make yourself ridiculous as a village prude."

I returned to my rooms deeply distressed. Had I been unreasonable? Were not Elsie my own goddess, I had suspected a flaw in the sculpture. The day following, I telephoned I had tickets for the theatre. She replied that she did not care for the play but would be glad to dine with me downtown. "I have something I want to say to you, Stanley," she finished crisply.

For our appointment she was ravishingly dressed. At her request we chose the palm garden of a Longacre café. The dawning realization that she was accustomed to such luxuries already pinched the prospects of my professor's pocketbook. Elsie was politely subdued, piquantly distraite. Over our ices, she fixed her large eyes upon me solemnly. "Dear boy," she began, "I've been turning our engagement over in my mind these last few days. I'm afraid it was a midsummer madness. I hate to believe so, Stanley, but I can't help feeling that you don't like my friends, that you disapprove of my own conduct. Either that, or there's some other girl you haven't been able to forget. In my case, I've decided it's fairer to leave you free." She paused, and, with devastating swiftness, under the festive light of the candleabra, with a hundred diners laughing

about us, passed my ring across the table. "Take it, Stanley, and go back to your —what's her name—Martha?—that you told me about. I dare say it's for the best, anyway. You are too good for me. I could never live up to your ideal of a professor's wife. But I shall always want you for a friend, dear boy, shall always consider our engagement the most illuminating experience that— For heaven's sake, say something! Take the ring. Do you want people to think we've been ill-bred enough to quarrel?"

Clever Elsie, to administer my congé on the public block where there could be no welder's come-back! After that night I never saw her again. For years I hated her as only a man can hate the woman who has made a fool of him. In a burst of post-mortem clarity I saw how she had played me up. But why a humble pawn like myself, when there were such kings as a Cuban planter's son and an Asheville dancing man on her board of love? That she told a season or two later to a friend of my room-mate's sister, "I'd never been engaged to an animated 'cyclopedia," she confided; "and I wanted see what it was like."

"But his heart," protested the other girl, "—was it fair to trifle with that?"

"Its,"—Elsie corrected the pronoun carefully. "Encyclopedias don't have hearts."

Well, again the fortress of my young desires had come tumbling about my ears. Again I put myself through the third degree of introspection; but this time there was no Martha to pity, no professor of public speaking to decipher my *débâcle*. My mind was in a state impossible for study. I was contemplating suicide. Australia, eternal misogyny—when Circumstance, in the guise of a brief telegram, intervened.

My father was ill of an old complaint, and I must come home at once. My mother and I passed ten days at his bedside. Then we buried him. At a family council over the will, it was discovered that his property was tied up in his business, which no one in his employ was competent to run, and that what our lawyer called "the best interests of the estate" could only be com-

serviced by my remaining at home and taking over the store. Accordingly, I packed my professorship in the attic and went into hardware.

At first I scarcely minded—hardly called it a sacrifice. Tenpenny nails took my mind off tenpenny troubles. Before I realized, I had got down to a sort of working readjustment with the environment to which I had bidden so bumptious a farewell: was able to ignore Grampaw Byers' chuckles, outstare small boys' glances of sartorial curiosity, convince former acquaintances that I was no longer a visiting expatriate. My desire to be socially let alone was mystifiedly complied with.

I avoided Martha. But one day we met on the street. She was subtly changed. Her trim suit made no pretensions to fashion. The too-eager lines of her face had relaxed into a not uncomely resignation. Reconciled at last to the inevitable, thought I to myself.

She accepted the encounter without embarrassment. "How do you do, Stanley?" she said. "It seems good to see you back. We're fellow townsmen now, I suppose?"

"Yes," I replied rather ungraciously. "I suppose so." Suddenly the taut cord of old hesitations between us slackened, and, from the depths of a soul-sickness I had been fighting within myself all day, I asked her, "How do you stand it here, Martha?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, to live here—all the time!"

She smiled without bitterness. "It isn't a question of *how*. I've got to stand it. Besides, I've never lived anywhere else. Perhaps that makes a difference."

"But are you happy?"

"Possibly not happy—but at least, contented."

"But what do you do with yourself, with your time?"

"Oh, I sew a good deal, and collect postage stamps, read aloud to old Mrs. Simon, write papers for the missionary society, and play the piano at prayer meeting."

"But I—I'm not a woman, Martha. I can't sew or write missionary papers."

"No," she laughed; "but I can give you a man's formula that'll help, per-

haps: ask everything of yourself, nothing of others."

I went from her, astounded. Herself a knocker at forbidden gates, here in this obscure provincial town she had worked out the identical philosophy my professor had given me: "Try, at least till you are thirty, to cultivate the human touch; and, by that time, even if you don't succeed, you will have developed within yourself other resources that will make your life worth while." As yet I had made no progress toward such resources. And Martha was far from thirty. In the game of life she whom I had despised was putting one over on me.

I got the habit of dropping in at the Huggins home, occasionally—but not too often. The tobacco-tinted velvet of Martha's mail-order rockers held warmth if no taste. She had learned to pour tea and serve cakes; her intelligence was groping up to a discussion of the President's policies or the latest novel. But there was always a certain constraint. I knew too much about her; she guessed too much about me. And I was still a seeker after other gods.

For three years I camped stolidly in my small-town desert; cut window-glass and matched paint-cards, squirmed through church with my mother, stalked the clayey river bottom, joined the Board of Trade, was invited into the Tuesday Travelers' Club.

Sometimes for weeks I was quiescent. Again, maddened by an evening of stifling banalities, in the secrecy of my own chamber, I stripped my body and put it through some wild pace of exercise until I found it healthy, with supple muscles under firm white skin; stripped my mind till I proved it subtle under the taunt of a Greek paradigm, or a geometric corollary, or a batting average; stripped my soul till I judged it decent—as souls go, these hedonistic days. Within me, as ever, I felt all the elements of form, and speed, and power. Could I never throw the clutch into high?

On the crest of my next wave of revolt, I purchased a steamer-trunk and set out on a final argosy. Europe was my goal. What did I seek? I scarcely knew: new Egerias, perhaps; stimuli

to draw me back to my post-graduate studies; cultured friendships to salve the wounds of my loneliness. The hardware business had become self-respecting, if not respected; and I departed with an easy pocketbook.

At the first I was unfortunate in selecting a fashionable steamship line. The first cabin list was exclusive. My table companions comprised a whist coterie already formed. I paced the deck in envious gloom, puffed solitary, middle-aged cigars in the smoking-room, or joined a boisterous pool on the day's run.

The ship docked on a stormy day. *Ab initio* the whole panorama of the Continent was thrown out of focus by the miserable feeling of isolation that had taken possession of me. What was scenery without a cicerone? I found the Apian Way an abomination of desolation. Athens cried aloud for friendly comparisons. The Riviera would have been a paradise—*à deux*. At hotels I was treated with the frigid respect of a pundit or a clergyman. The only Americans I became acquainted with were an Indianapolis spinster and a flamboyant collegian from Jersey City. With the latter I sipped *vermouth à l'eau* at a sidewalk café in Paris; we went on to Montmartre; and he ended up the evening by touching me for a ten. I lingered a few days, strolling forlornly about Versailles, staring gloomily over the Seine bridges, haunting the *poste restante*—until, when I found the bedizened faces of the boulevards beckoning me, I packed my trunk in a panic and rushed for the Calais express.

It was a rough passage back—in keeping with the turbulence of my spirits. Above the plunge of the boat the surge of my thoughts bore up once more Geraldine's adolescent perfidy, Elsie's facile cupidity, my master's course abandoned in its first semester—should I never have any but humiliating memories? The smell of putty, the smear of paint, the gaucheries of Hicksville gaiety, the cant of small-town piety—must I go back to it all for ever?

For three days I tossed in a beam-ends berth. Then the sea subsided, the sun came out; I left my state-room shakily, crossed the velvet-toned stretches of

the grand salon, and—walked into Mrs. Allary! The same Mrs. Allary that had spent a summer at the Long Island hotel where I clerked. Concerning her I remembered only that she had been beautiful, charming, gracious; and that she acknowledged the possession of a studio in Manhattan. I had worshiped her from afar, wondering a little, perhaps, how the proceeds of her paintings could finance her wardrobe and her travels.

She recalled me with the easy stretch of a Bohemian memory. That I had once sorted her mail made no difference in her cordiality. After the true Gothamite's standard, she accepted me at the face value of my clothes and my bank-roll. We became partners at bridge, marathoned the deck, sipped cordials in the *à la carte* café.

By the time we reached New York I was completely *épris*. I dallied a week to lunch, and matinée, and to look at pictures. Mrs. Allary was indeed charming. The hours I spent with her were a fervid heaven; those afterward at my hotel a fervid hell. A dozen times my vacillating fingers clutched a time-table; a dozen times I flung it across the room, my senses steeped in the memory of her impelling smile, her ingratiating manner, the subtle odor of *tréfle incarnat* that emanated from her presence. . . .

Over a highball in the Venetian room of a famous hostelry we sat at midnight. Mrs. Allary looked steadily into my blood-shot eyes and feverish cheeks. "I'd rather not go on to that *bal masqué*," she said. "I'm a work-lady, you know, and I've a model engaged for to-morrow. Do you mind—very much?"

My face fell at this strange reversal of her usual complaisant mood. "Why is it you talk to me as if I were a school-boy?" I choked, with the bitterness of suspected evasions, frustrated desires. "Aren't you ever going to take me behind the scenes into the real life of Broadway? Yes, I *do* mind—like hell."

She started. Her eyes flashed an angry glint, then softened into a look I should never have imagined. "It *is* true," she said, as if to herself. "You have a *good* face. You don't *belong* in this vulture city. What are you doing here, anyway, buying dinners for a *passée* orchid old

enough to be your mother, offering your soul to the devil? You're running away from something, from somebody—from yourself. Tell me, I've seen so many lives in the shoals. Maybe I can help you—before you strike the rocks."

I resisted, as unemotional man should, the entreaty of her voice; but the touch of her hand on my arm was too much. The tide-gates swung open, and to this baffling woman in charmeuse and amethysts I poured out the wretched story of my limitations, my disappointments, my rancor against life. When I had finished, she nodded her burnished, coiffured head slowly. "I know," she said somberly. "I too was born out there beyond Buffalo. I too was dissatisfied with the world as I found it. And I set forth to claim my birthright. But I—I've had to buy it, and the price has been too high. It always is—for anybody. Oh, my dear friend, go back, go back now, before it's too late. There's something waiting for you out there: a girl, a mission, a trust—something. And if not, just to be able to walk down Main Street and look every man and woman in the eye, that's enough!"

I shook my head doggedly.

"If you wont go back for your own sake, go for mine. There's coming a time when I must settle my accounts with life, when I—shall need the credit of one white page, one decent impulse—"

She paused—waiting. Silent, I was beholding Elsie as she passed my ring across that other table, turned the knife in my young heart's wound. Again had the metropolis cheated me. Again was my soul denied. Where could I hide from the sting of it, from the shame? At last I answered faintly, "I'll go."

Man proposes, woman disposes. Already for that I thanked God as I tossed remorsefully in my Pullman berth. In the gray twilight of the following afternoon I alighted at the dingy depot—back home. A trio of school-boys snickered at my velours hat. Grampaw Byers sat in the baggage-master's armchair. "Hullo, bub!" he called out to me disrespectfully. "Them furrin parts gave out already?" I hurried past him with crimsoning cheeks. The bus was wait-



The next Sunday she took me to hear the young Presbyterian pastor, who had just been installed.

ing for the Globe hotel. In it I saw several critical countenances I knew. I could not bring myself to face them. Up a side street I slunk home—I, who had gone forth so blithely—pariah, outcast, in the place of my nativity; not even a cordial handclasp to deserve, not even a pup to whistle to my heels!

For the remainder of the week I

shunned the store and tramped the river bottom. Sunday I went to church. Permeating the quiet nave was a tranquilizing peace that sought my prodigal's soul. How venerable the aged minister looked! In the front rows sat a group of little girls with madonna faces and white hair-ribbons. Addie Cline sang "The Holy City." just as she had sung

it when I was a lad of fourteen. I saw Martha in the Huggins pew, very straight and comely in her dark serge suit. I wondered if she knew that I was home, if she cared that I— The mist of a gay Venetian room swam suddenly before my eyes. Mrs. Allary was bending toward me across the damask cloth: "Go back—now—before it is too late. A trust, a girl, a mission—waiting for you there, while in your perversity you are wandering in a far country. At least be able to walk down Main Street and look every man and woman in the eye!" By an infinitesimal margin the chance was still mine. And this I owed—to a mondaine's wistful moment! How to pray I had forgotten. But I bowed my head.

I left the service chastened. In the Sabbath calm of that afternoon I reviewed my life and found it—not worth the living. My years were nearly thirty, and as yet I had made no progress toward those resources within myself, which, my professor had assured me, were the only alternative to the human touch. I was indeed in the shoals. There was no time to be lost.

I began by applying Martha's axiom: to ask everything of myself, nothing of others. In my business I spared no pains to match a fresco or duplicate a window-shade. At home I planted a garden. In the church I organized a boys' club. I turned my mirror permanently to the wall—tried to beam equally upon the butcher's boy and the local *cognoscenti*.

It was a good many weeks before I recovered sufficient self-respect to cross Martha's threshold. I found her Rochester-burner a beacon of hospitality. I slid cosily into one of the tobacco rockers. Over a cup of tea we exchanged the first sallies of a new intimacy. The final barriers were down. I too had ceased to covet and repine—was no longer asking to be served, but to serve. And our eyes were lowered from forbidden heights to the course before us. . . . The next Sunday she took me to hear the young Presbyterian pastor, who had just been installed. She said he was preaching a new social vision, a new gospel for

churches. To me it sounded more like socialism—what they shout from soap-boxes on the public square. But I don't know. I suspect Martha is wiser about such things than I am. I have been too busy making a failure out of myself to follow what's gone on in the world. . . . Last month I sent to my jeweler's a solitaire diamond in its little velvet box. It is to be replaced by another—by half, at least, more expensive. Martha has that coming to her.

Lucky Stanley! Far luckier than I deserve. Dare I picture smooth years stretching out ahead of me? I am already "a leading citizen," called upon to introduce speakers and head subscription lists. Soon I shall be made president of the Board of Trade—some day a deacon in the church. I shall be the contented husband of a good wife and the proud father of well-born children.

Homely! Good! No personality! The safeguards a Wiser Power threw about me to protect me from myself! Every day I grow more thankful. My pangs of self-pity are dead. The wounds to my self-esteem are healing over. My regrets are beginning to be only the memories of regrets. Perhaps, after all, the big things are little, the little things big. At any rate, Martha is going to be a pretty big thing in my life.

Savants, geniuses, Apollos: what have they on me? Now I shall never know. And I shall waste very little time in guessing. My humdrum days will be too full. Still, I fancy sometimes there will steal over me vagrant, let-down hours when I shall become again the misprized dreamer of my youth, stifling facts with fantasies, asking explanations of the inexplicable: the discontented egoist of my young manhood, buffeting the old barriers, nursing the old rancors, flinging out to the end the old wistful yearning of the pinchbeck soul: could I have held one perfect trust, have kept one tryst Olympian, could I have brushed the comrade shoulder with one Pythias in the passing throng, have thrilled one vast assemblage, have scaled one heaven-kissed garden of the world's delight and scattered riotously a single joyous rose-garland!



The Miracle

By Edwin L. Sabin

THIS is the very true story of the faulty condition of the present God left at the home of Percy's folks.

ILLUSTRATED BY B CORY KILVERT

IT IS not given mortals (save, on embarrassing occasions, to fathers and mothers) to be omniscient, else Percy (how he hated that name!) would not have gone to pass the night at Bob's house, prized privilege though this was. He had not been forewarned of the marvelous visitation destined for his own home. Nobody seemed to have expected it. At least, he was led to suppose that not much notice had been given, in advance.

Father, when rather early he appeared, with his summons, did not even then mention, in terms specific, the miraculous descent. He did not mention God, and the prodigy which had been enacted. As he walked fast, escorting Percy, whose slim legs twinkled, twinkled, and whose heart much regretted that he had not been permitted to eat as many buckwheat cakes as Bob, father did ask:

"Percy, what would you like to have the most of anything in the whole world? Think, now."

Father's tone was so expansive and promising, that Percy felt bewildered at first. But he knew his mind.

"A velocipede!" he piped, hopefully.

"Oh!" responded father, strangely disapproving. "Is that all?"

Yes, that was all, if one began at the very top. And why *not* a velocipede? A red velocipede, with iron wheels! Father proffered no adequate explanation, but strode on, with Percy hop-skipping beside him.

At the house itself there was no trace of the late presence of the Almighty to strike unsuspecting senses — although there was indeed an aroma pungent and agreeable, reminding of Doctor Brown's office, down town, its delightfully grewsome preserving bottles, and charts of skinless and fleshless men. This aroma impinged directly upon father's haste; for mother was still in bed!

The aroma, and mother's serious delay in arising, and a certain mysterious hovering of Maggie, the Girl, and a neighbor woman, pricked Percy with quick alarm. He still had no presentiment of the marvel that had been staged during his brief absence; and this pilotage to mother's bedside was an odd introduction to a velocipede.

From her pillow, mother smiled wanly, to assuage the wide-eyed dismay.

"Darling," she addressed, weakly; but whether in farewell or in welcome, how could Percy know? Father hastened to interest him.

"WHAT did you say you wanted, Percy?" he invited, glancing at mother, Maggie, the Girl, was peeking in at the doorway. The hush seemed to encourage hope. So—

"A velocipede," averred Percy, bravely.

None was here, unless in the bed with mother, which did not appeal as reasonable, although mothers and fathers are accomplished in happy surprises, when they wish. The answer apparently had been anticipated, to be exposed for the general amusement; but why so great a boon as a velocipede should meet with a titter of derision from Maggie and a laugh even from mother, passed comprehension.

"Darling!" protested mother. "Wouldn't you rather have something else? Something *better*, to play with?"

"Something alive!" suggested father.

"A puppy?" Percy was certain that now he had guessed it. Oh, a puppy! That was it; it must be! It was in bed with mother, because it moved the covers and whined. Truly, parents were omnipotent beings, when the divine mood was upon them; and evidently Percy had been (unwittingly) a very good boy.

However, the puppy idea seemed to be like the velocipede, only the stuff of dreams, for mother flushed beautifully, and father and Maggie actually laughed outright.

"No; better than a puppy," informed father. "There! Go on up to the bed. Mamma will show you."

Maggie, the Girl, came too, and carefully laid back the covers while mother fondly suffered her.

"A little baby sister!" announced Maggie.

"A little baby sister!" announced father.

"Yes, darling, a little baby sister!" announced mother. "See her? Isn't she sweet?"

'Twas no puppy, then! This must be disappointment Number One. 'Twas not a velocipede. Disappointment Number Two. And a baby sister? This pucker-eyed, wrinkle-visaged, open-mouthed morsel the color of a young rat? Not much!

"Aw—is it?"

Assent was universal. Further communication from Percy was awaited. Politeness demanded that he dance with joy; but—shucks!

"Isn't she sweet, dear?"

No one may know the struggle in Percy's dutiful breast: candor warred with decent respect.

"Whose is she?"

"Mamma's and papa's and yours."

"Did papa buy her?"

"No, dearie, God brought her."

"When?"

"Last night."

"While I was gone?"

"Yes. Isn't she cunning?"

"Did you know He was going to bring her?"

"We hoped so. But isn't she sweet?"

"Did He send Lijah ahead to tell you He was comin' with her?"

Elijah ought to have been a very proper advance courier; but plainly he was a new thought to these others.

"No; He didn't send Elijah. But isn't she sweet? Her name is Alice."

"Did He say so?"

"No; He didn't say so. He let us choose the name."

"Is He comin' again to-night?"

Maggie, the Girl, uttered a queer explosive sound, and mother again flushed beautifully.

"Not to-night," said father, with a haste which was very abrupt.

"Not for a long, long while. One little baby sister at a time is enough, don't you think? Aren't you surprised? Aren't you glad?"

Surprised? Yes. Glad? Well, it was somewhat of a shock, after bright visions of a velocipede and a puppy. But God of course must have meant to be kind. The others seemed delighted. Had Percy been consulted, or had he been present instead of missing out at Bob's, he would have proposed a little sister for the rest of them, seeing that God had already brought her, but for himself he would have suggested the velocipede or the puppy. God could do anything, so this slight amendment would not have made any difference to Him.

"She *is* sweet, isn't she!" cooed mother, rapturously. "Kiss mamma, darling. And kiss baby sister."

To kiss mother was a blessed custom, a veritable heritage of boyhood. But "baby sister," as a new kissing proposition, was not particularly enticing. God's selection of babies might have been more choice, one would think.

However, the sense of miracle grew. God had been here—a tangible visitant, probably, leaving tangible evidence. Yet the house still stood as familiar and as homely as before Percy went to Bob's for the night. Not a shingle was looser, not a chimney-brick was knocked out; there was no symptom of thunderbolt or of whirlwind; there was nothing except that clean aroma, and that squeaky, human-rat gift in mother's bed!

How had He looked? How had God looked? Did He say anything? How had He come? And just why?

Nobody seemed to know. Father and Maggie, the Girl, were equally evasive.

Without doubt the scene must have been one of great confusion—of thunders and lightnings and rushing of winds, and so forth, as is in the Book of Revelations, read by the minister from the pulpit.

Bob must be told immediately. And so he was; and so were the other boys. None greeted the phenomenon quite with the awe that it deserved. Bob claimed that he himself had been brought, when a baby, by an angel; for such was the family lore. Fatty, who had a little brother, claimed that a *bird* brought *him*; and Spotty Crawford loudly championed the alleged miraculous offices of the doctor, who, according to his (Spotty's) father and mother, had left both a little brother and a little sister at his house.

If little brothers and sisters descended like manna, probably the doctor acted as

God's and the angel's earthly representative after the fact was accomplished; for he came early, this very day, with his phaeton and black bag, to Percy's house, and inspected matters. But if he was himself a distributor of baby brothers and baby sisters, he certainly had none now in his case or in his buggy, when Percy looked.

The astonishment and doubtless the fright, over the portentous visitation, and the exceeding care which the gift demanded, kept mother in bed, where she stayed for several days. Meanwhile baby sister didn't im-



— DORIS KILGAT —

"I'd rather have a brother baby than a sister baby. You can train your brother up to fight other kids, but a girl aint no good."

prove, to speak of, remaining the same squirmy, wrinkle-faced, weird object that she had appeared when fresh from God's extended hands. She was frequently to be fed, by bottle or by mother (either process being a gurgly, curious operation), or else she was to be amused or not to be wakened. There always was something.

That was the consensus of opinion, Percy found, among his peers; let a baby be presented by God, or the angel, or the doctor, there was always something. The gift was not so gratuitous as had seemed. One had to pay for it!

"Aw, you just wait, now," predicted Spotty, in much earnest. "You just wait, an' every time you want to have any fun you got to tend baby, an' whenever she bawls for anything you got to give it to baby, an' whenever your folks go out you got to stay with baby; an' you can't ever do nothin'!"

Spotty spoke feelingly, as by the book; and Fat concurred.

"That's so, you bet. I'd rather have a brother baby than a sister baby, though. You can train your brother up to fight other kids, but a girl aint no good."

And the baby left at Percy's house was a girl! Hub!

"Bet you she hasn't any teeth," challenged Spotty.

Percy couldn't say, but he knew. That is, he didn't know, but he could say. Girl or not, she should admit of no aspersions, beyond her sex.

"She has, too," he retorted. "'Course she has."

"She hasn't, either. Babies don't come with teeth. They don't!" scoffed Spot, out of his wide experience. "Do they, Fat?"

"Uh uh," again supported Fat. "But dogs an' cats do."

To the public mind, was this baby to be less than puppy or kitten? No! Privately, Percy might think his own

No teeth were in sight . . . He cautiously introduced an exploratory finger. It encountered only warmth and softness and smoothness, and much wetness.



thoughts; but before the world there was family honor to be sustained. The angel or the doctor might bring babies without teeth; God certainly would not be guilty of any such dereliction.

"She has, jus' the same. An' she's got black hair, already!"

That was a lucky hazard. With disastrous force it exploded in the enemy's rank, creating excitement and consternation. The Spotty and Fatty babies evidently had not been delivered with black hair.

"She hasn't, either."

"She has, too!"

And she had.

"It'll come off!" cried Spotty, with triumphant inspiration. "The Jones baby had black hair, but it didn't stick. It was false. It fell off an' left nothin' but fuzz."

"Our baby's wont, I bet you," retorted Percy. "An' she's got teeth. Bet you a hundred dollars!"

The hundred dollars, to cover, was not forthcoming. Spotty had consented that the black hair might be there, even though transitory; and this strengthened the case for the teeth.

"Cross your heart?"

Percy crossed his heart—thrilled as he did so. It was a defiant act, but if God had brought a baby without teeth and

with false hair. His was the responsibility for the side-steps that His mistake entailed.

However, Percy felt that he must inspect baby closely, to be certain of his ground. All of a sudden, she appeared to have much improved. She was fading to a pretty pink like the pink of her coverlet; her wrinkles were smoothing out; and her eyes seemed to be seeing things. She grinned and kicked foolishly, in recognition of Percy, stealthily standing over her crib; and there stirred within him a sheepish pride that she was a family possession.

But this was no occasion for sentimentality; the moment demanded hair and teeth. Yes, she had the hair. In that he had not been a vain boaster. The hair was black, even if cobwebby fine, on a rosy crown. The teeth were less pronounced; but the place where they ought to be, invited examination. The size of it, and the loose way in which it gaped open, facilitated research work.

No teeth were in sight, closely though he peered. The inner rim of the cavity was all of a redness, without one kernel of white to break the amazing expanse. He cautiously introduced an exploratory finger. It encountered only warmth and softness and smoothness, and much wetness; and with gurgling sounds the orifice contracted about the finger's base. This was fun, for Percy, but baby sister let go, with a wail of disappointment, and he must tiptoe out.

"Were you teasing baby sister?" accused Maggie, the Girl. "Were you, now? You woke her up! Listen to her! La! Aren't you 'shamed?"

Percy lacked heart to explain and vindicate himself. The hour would pass, but baby sister—their baby—had no teeth. The fact cast suspicion upon her as a whole. Maybe her hair

was false, and she was no better than the angel and the doctor brands of baby. Percy's own hair was tight; but one tooth was loose. If teeth voluntarily detached, so might hair, he presumed.

"My mother says when babies come with hair already, it falls off an' they got to grow more; an' they don't have teeth till after they grow 'em, either," declared Bob one day.

"Bet you another hundred dollars."

"Take me in an' let me see, then."

"I can't. She's asleep."

"I'm goin' to have my mother ask your mother, an' you'll owe me a hundred dollars," asserted Bob.

The monetary obligation was not important, considering a steady income of ten cents a week for carrying the milk (father keeping the ten cents in trust), but the tooth was looser. So Percy deemed that he might better ask mother himself, in time to renege if advisable.



The tooth was in his pocket, amidst other treasures, and he stalked out. He had done his level best; let the heavens fall.

"Bob an' all the kids say baby's hair's goin' to fall off," he blurted, anxiously. "Is it? 'Twont, will it?"

"Oh, yes," assured mother. "This isn't baby's real hair. It's only some hair she borrowed, to come with, so as to look pitty-pitty. Sec? It's thinning out already. It will brush off, and she'll have bootiful golden hair, muvver's darling!"

Hah! The dictum had issued. There was no use in inquiring specifically about the teeth. Now with false hair and a toothless mouth, baby sister (handicapped by her sex) could demonstrate no superiority to the common run of babies. Of course, her smartness was patent to the home circle, but where was the visible evidence for the world? The disaster rather shook one's faith in God's judgment as to babies.

PERCY'S tooth was very loose, and to be waggled fascinatingly with tongue and finger. It was the second tooth thus to default on him. The first had been left in an apple, where it had stuck, to Percy's astonishment. His hair still seemed tight. Well, even if baby's hair did fall off, it had been there. He could prove that by mother. As regards teeth—! Aha! Why not? The thought was a brilliant one. He might yet correct the Almighty's oversight, but he must hurry.

This second tooth was the obstinate kind. The first, as said, had voluntarily uprooted, swapping mouth for apple. The second clung—to wobble and twist and sway and all *but* come out, affording constant occupation for days. The emergency seemed to demand the last resort of shuddersome violence by string and door-knob.

Maggie, the Girl, obligingly offered her services as executioner-in-chief, and was declined. Before the mirror, Percy delicately noosed the tooth, so long apparently on its last leg; and with string carefully dangling, sought the seclusion of the barn. There the free end of his halter was tied to the stall. A door might be tricky and swing of its own accord, but a stall could be controlled.

Ouch! No, he was not ready, yet. Please don't move, stall. And they might have been there still, boy and stall, con-

nected by string and each waiting upon the other, had not Rose, the cow, flicked her tail and by crossing the string, cut the Gordian knot. Anyway, Percy dodged, and gasped—and there hung the tooth! Why—hurrah! Didn't hurt a bit.

Percy hastily rescued it. It was white at one end and pink at the other, and was in condition to be replanted immediately, like geranium slips. Also, he could spit blood! He burned to rush and show the kids his new accomplishment, but the near future harbored more important details than spitting blood even before an envious company.

He laid the tooth away in water, to have it fresh against the moment when the coast around baby sister was clear. He fervently prayed that the tooth would keep.

Opportunity could not be far deferred; nor was it. The very next afternoon he was called upon (as was to be expected) to "tend baby" while mother "stepped out." Ah, when she returned, how surprised and pleased would she be to see baby sister smiling with a tooth full size—a tooth the forerunner of a nice set, probably, as it spread and threw up shoots.

At Percy's approach, baby sister, bolstered among her pillows, goo-gooed amiably and invited with her expanse of silly gums as yet toothless. Already her phenomenal black hair was gone, just as mother and Spot had predicted, and the alleged "bootiful" golden fuzz had succeeded. And now if he only managed to install that tooth, he—and she—would be established before the world. He hastened to get it. It looked fresh.

To baby sister the advances were a game. She gurgled and cooed and kicked, as he tickled her in the stomach to open her mouth. With that accomplished, the affair developed more serious than a game. So far as he could see by the tickling subterfuge while he poised the tooth for a quick jab, in all that circumference of red, wet gums there was no hole or trace of any hole! No spot where a tooth would fit! And the gums would not yield, so that he might stick the tooth in. He had thought that he could stick it fast, as in putty or earth; but, shucks!

When he tried harder, baby sister strenuously objected. Her cries rose long and shrill, affording a splendid view of the entire tantalizing cavity, but not facilitating matters.

No, the tooth would not stick. Baby sister would have swallowed it, once, and only a prompt plunge to the rescue regained it in time. Would she have died? Horrors! He had better quit. Plainly, she was never to have any teeth: her gums were solid!

"Aw, shut up!" he bade, crossly. Such a baby was most exasperating.

Mother and Maggie, the Girl, both rushed in. They must have heard. Their reproaches at his "teasing" were unjust, and added to a burden already more than boy should bear. The tooth was in his pocket, amidst other treasures, and he stalked out. He had done his level best; let the heavens fall.

They fell. On the very next tour abroad, condemned to trundling baby sister up and down while other kids played, Percy met Bob and Spotty.

"Now let's see your old black hair," they demanded.

"It came off. It was there, but it came off. You ask my mother."

"Where's your teeth, then? Now where's your teeth? Bet you're 'fraid to open her mouth an' let us see."

A bright idea illumined his brain.

"They came out, too."

"They didn't either. She didn't have any."

"Bet you she did. Bet you I can show you one. I saved it. Lookie here?" And show it he did.

For a moment they were staggered.

"'Tisn't hers."

But the advantage lay with him.

"Bet you it came out of her mouth."

And so it had. God would not call that a lie, would He?

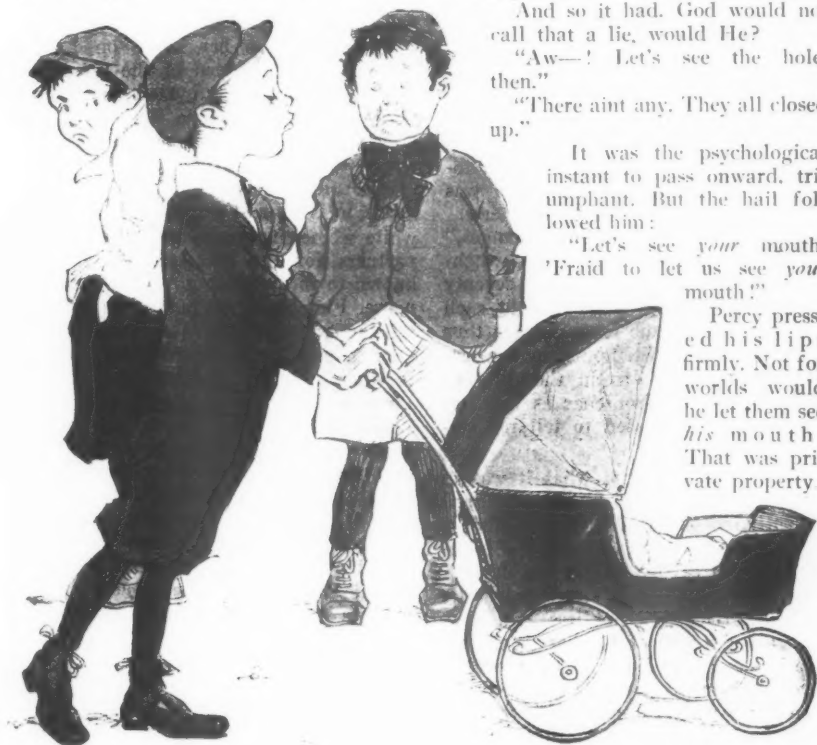
"Aw—! Let's see the hole, then."

"There aint any. They all closed up."

It was the psychological instant to pass onward, triumphant. But the hail followed him:

"Let's see *your* mouth 'Fraid to let us see *your* mouth?"

Percy pressed his lips firmly. Not for worlds would he let them see *his* mouth. That was private property.



—KORN KILVERT

It was the psychological instant to pass onward, triumphant.

The Faith of Paul Duchaine

By Victor Rousseau

Author of "Rachel," etc.

*THIS is the story of the youth and the maid
who mocked at love in the days of old Quebec.*

ILLUSTRATED BY FANNY MUNSELL

DOWN the declivity that leads from the citadel toward Quebec's most famous hotel a toboggan sped swiftly; it ploughed through the snow and stopped. A girl and a man emerged laughing, and began to pull the sled up the ascent again. The girl was a typical Quebecoise, with dark hair and eyes, red cheeks, and that beauty for which the Citadel Town is of repute. Other toboggans followed, and the slope was black with the two lines of travelers.

"Eh, Monsieur, youth never changes," croaked the old man who stood watching the pastime. "For more than seventy years I have seen the same sight each winter, and the same faces. It was thus when the Château St. Louis stood where this hotel stands; so in the days of Carleton, and of Frontenac as well, no doubt. My father used to tell me stories....."

"Still, Quebec is not what it was in my grandfather's time," he continued presently. "You must picture it in the thirties, or earlier, in the splendid twenties, or even earlier yet, in the days of the first Émigrés. We were smaller then, it is true, but not less gay. And, after all, the soul of Quebec dwells inside her walls, and not in the new city beyond them. So we had everything, even in my grandfather's time, when the equipages choked Louis Street, every afternoon, I love to think of my grandfather's days, Monsieur.

"My father used to tell me of the carnival. I remember when I was a little lad they spoke of Mademoiselle Marguërite Thiboult, who is now, I have no doubt, forgotten, though I could point out to you her house on Louis Street. She was Queen of the Carnival that night when Paul Duchaine went gliding past her throne with cap undoffed. The skaters spun over the frozen river—cowled monks and hooped ladies, mock soldiers with mock nuns, and beaux in frills and ruffles of the period, while women in masks picked out their partners for the rout, and, being unknown to them, made merry at their expense. Flambeaux on high stands flared all the way between the ramparts of Quebec and Levis, on the south shore, for there had been no snow, and the St. Lawrence was smooth as glass.

"In the midst of the throng, seated languidly upon her tinsel throne, with drooped eyelashes and discontented mouth, Mademoiselle Thiboult, the Queen, surrounded by her courtiers, watched the skaters.

"'He skates well. Who is he?' she asked, somewhat intrigued, as a young man in a plain dress went by without saluting her, though he passed within a few feet of where she sat.

"Monsieur Auguste Dion saluted her with mock courtesy.

"'I will find out and bring him into your presence, Mademoiselle,' he said, and glided out among the crowd. He



Paul, frilled and ruffled like the best, stole out of the shop, skates in hand, and hurried toward the river.

soon found the unknown and touched him on the arm.

"'Monsieur,' he lisped, 'will you have the goodness to give me your name—or, rather, to appear before Her Majesty and announce yourself?'"

"The young man stared at his interrogator.

"'I am Paul Duchaine,' he answered in a French provincial accent. 'But I had thought,' he continued, smiling, 'that we had left Majesties behind us when we left France.'"

"'I shall inform Her Majesty of your words,' replied Monsieur Dion, and brought the young man before the throne.

"'I have executed Your Majesty's command,' the dandy lisped, bringing his skate-heels together with a click. 'This gentleman is Paul Duchaine, without the prefix, and he thought he had

left Your Majesty behind him when he left France.'

"There was a great roar of laughter from those around the throne, but Mademoiselle Marguérite, being wearied of her courtiers, had the caprice to smile kindly on the young man.

"'Why have you not saluted me as you went by, Monsieur?' she asked. 'Doubtless you have but lately landed and are ignorant of the polite ceremonies of our carnival, for I can hardly think you to be one of those wicked atheists who first denied Our Lord and then murdered His Majesty of martyred memory.'

"'A Republican!' shouted Monsieur Dion, making a mock thrust with his sword. 'Treason! A Napoleonist! Say but the word, Mademoiselle, and I shall lay his head at your feet as a love offering!'"

"'Auguste, thou art always a chatter-box,' answered Mademoiselle Marguérite. 'Well, Monsieur, have you no tongue?' she continued, addressing the young man again.

"'Yes, Mademoiselle. I have a tongue,' he answered hotly. 'As you have said, I landed in Quebec but lately and was ignorant of the polite ceremonies of your carnival. I have been here but one week, in fact, and I reside in the Rue Fleurie with my brother, Jean Duchaine, the furrier.'

"'Ah, bon soir, Monsieur le Fourreur,' shouted Monsieur Dion, making a mocking bow.

"Instantly the crowd took up the cry. 'Bon soir, Monsieur le Fourreur!' they shouted, circling around the young man with mock salutations. 'A toi, Monsieur le Fourreur.'"

"Paul Duchaine's face flushed, and he breathed hard through his nostrils. But Mademoiselle, seeing the turn things

were taking, and being still capricious, rose out of her throne.

"'Monsieur Duchaine shall escort me home,' she said. 'Auguste, you will resign your privilege for this night?'"

"*Ah, oui, Mademoiselle,*" muttered Auguste with a grimace.

"It was truly a difficult situation for the beaux who followed unhappily in the train of Mademoiselle. Margu rite Thiboult was one of those beauties who have made our city famous ever since Nelson lost his heart to one and nearly ruined his career for her. Twenty-two, tall, statuesque, with a wealth of dark hair, and gray eyes which could deal tenderness and flash hauteur with equal facility, of one of the rich old families of the aristocracy, it was no wonder that she held all the idle young men captive in her train. Many a one had fancied that some day this beauty would smile for him alone, only to be sent home sadly, with ruffled plumage. For Mademoiselle was not kind to those whom she disdained, and they included all her mob of servitors.

"It was, then, a difficult situation for the gentlemen trailing up Louis Street behind her, while she enacted this strange whim of walking back with the newcomer. It was especially hard for Monsieur Auguste Dion, whose wealth and insinuation had given him status as Mademoiselle's favorite. Still, he had met difficult situations before, only—not when his enemy was a common furrier from the Lower Town of shopkeepers.

"At the door of her house Mademoiselle extended her hand. *'Adieu, Monsieur Duchaine. Or, rather, au revoir,'* she said. 'Remember, friendships made lightly often endure long.'

"Paul Duchaine shook the hand of Mademoiselle instead of kissing it, to the amusement of the outcast courtiers. They grinned at him in angry spite as he passed between their ranks and down the street, but there was something in his face which forbade even Monsieur Auguste to speak to him.

"As for Monsieur Duchaine, you may believe that he seemed to walk on air. Only six short weeks before he had left his father's roof at Arles, to join his elder brother Jean, whose fur trade was

already proving prosperous; and here he was, the envied, the hated, of all Quebec!

"On the next night, while Jean Duchaine pored over his books of accounts, Paul, frilled and ruffled like the best, stole out of the shop, skates in hand, and hurried toward the river. It was the second day of the carnival, and the last. Mademoiselle Thiboult, weary, and in no enviable mood, yet, woman-like, disdaining to yield her place to some lesser toast, sat languidly upon her throne, dealing out sharp words to those who cringed for her favors.

"Gliding across the ice toward her, Paul Duchaine halted before the throne and doffed his cap. *'Bon soir, Mademoiselle, Votre Majest .'*" he exclaimed, rejoiced to see Monsieur Auguste's teeth set angrily as he stood beside the throne.

"Mademoiselle Margu rite looked blankly at the newcomer. 'Who is this gentleman?' she asked of Auguste Dion.

"'Ah, Mademoiselle, do you not remember that you threw him the condescension of your glance last night?' inquired Auguste. 'Doubtless he has come back for more.'

"*'Ah, oui, the furrier,'* said Mademoiselle. 'Well, *Monsieur le Fourreur*, I have no need for furs, being well supplied, so move aside and do not obstruct my view.'

"'Move, *Monsieur le Fourreur.*' snarled Auguste Dion, and once more the crowd took up the cry. Some one seized a cake of ice and hurled it at him; they danced round him upon their skates, waltzing, swaying, grimacing, hooting at him, maddened with their tardy triumph. As for Mademoiselle Thiboult, as though this meant nothing to her, she sat pensively upon her throne.

"For a moment Paul could not understand. Then he knew, and, ignoring the mimicking crowd, he advanced two steps and planted himself before Mademoiselle.

"'I see you are a mockery, as others have seen and told,' he said in low, penetrating tones of intense anger. The blood flamed in his cheeks. 'You are all a mockery,' he cried. 'Your throne of tinsel, your hollow crowd of followers, and



"For a moment Paul could not understand. Then ignoring the mimicking crowd, he advanced two steps and planted himself before Mademoiselle. 'I see you are a mockery, as others have seen and told,' he said in low, penetrating tones of intense anger. 'You are all a mockery,' he cried. 'Your throne of tinsel, your hollow crowd of followers, and you yourself, who play with the hearts of honest men, are a mockery in God's eyes, you wanton!'"

you yourself, who play with the hearts of honest men, are a mockery in God's eyes, you wanton!"

"Paul Duchaine stepped out of the throng—which, paralyzed with dismay, and cowering in the presence of Paul's genuine wrath, shuffled their skates uneasily and cast furtive glances toward Mademoiselle. As for her, at Paul's first words she had started up in her chair with an imperious gesture, her own cheeks redder than his; but when he had ended she crouched limply down, with a blanched face, indrawing shuddering sobs.

"When she looked up again, Paul was far away.

"'Mademoiselle,' said Auguste Dion, 'if he were not a common furrier, whom no gentleman could stoop to touch, his blood should answer for this insult.'

"'I think that he spoke truly,' answered Mademoiselle with a wry smile, drawing her cloak about her shoulders. 'Take me home, Auguste.'

"It happened, Monsieur, that honest Jean Duchaine needed a representative in Montreal to purchase furs; thus when, the next morning, Paul volunteered to go, his brother was highly pleased. He had not taken kindly to Paul's pleasure-loving instincts. He gave him brotherly advice, intermixed with shrewd commercial instructions. The tide of immigration was already streaming westward; prices ruled high; trade was booming everywhere; and the Indians were still half ignorant of the value of the pelts they carried to Montreal. Jean Duchaine had long wished to break the Company's monopoly; now he saw his chance to become a rich man in a few years. He bundled Paul into a sleigh, and before noon the young man was speeding westward, with an abiding bitterness in his heart and the resolution to achieve.

"This was in 1813. The power of Napoleon was already crumbling. Defeated and disgraced, he had hurried back from Russia with the scattered remnants of his once mighty army, to find old foes springing up all about him. Nations in arms were confronting France upon her eastern frontiers. In the south Wellington was bursting

through the Pyrenees. Two years afterward at Waterloo the power of the Corsican was broken forever. The change in France brought about a new social upheaval which was reflected in Lower Canada as well, many of whose prosperous families still drew their incomes from the mother country. Fortunes were made and lost in speculation. Old Monsieur Thibault, who had blindly and credulously backed Napoleon's star, aristocratic though his traditions were, lost everything, except the house, enough of a pitiful income to provide against starvation, and—Marguérite. There were few old families but were hit hard, for most had bowed to what once seemed inevitable and backed Bonaparte. Now they went softly and sadly down the famous street; and saddest and softest of all were the steps of Charles Thibault, until he died.

"Auguste Dion had lost his riches also and needed a rich bride. All the gaiety and mirth of old days was turned to sadness. They had danced Bonaparte's legions across every frontier of France and danced them home again; now there was no more dancing, for their old world had crumbled away.

"When Mademoiselle Marguérite had gone home that night, hearing still in her ears the ringing, scornful tones of the only man who had ever denounced her, she lay upon her bed in an agony of shame. It had been so commonplace a thing, this playing with a man's heart—a common man's; and he had turned on her as though she were a vile woman, and he had called her so. For days she could not bear to leave her house. It seemed as though the entire town was tattling about the insult. She seemed to see sneering faces behind the venetians, decorously drawn, of the houses on Louis Street. When at last she emerged from her seclusion she flung herself more widely into pleasure. Even her friends grew scandalized. More than one life, they say, Monsieur, was taken in her name, either by suicide or hostile hands. And the routs continued, the balls, riddotti, all the mad revels of Quebec that stood at the precipice's edge. And then, at last, the news of Waterloo stunned the revelers into silence.

"Monsieur Auguste alone, insinuating and heartless, had continued in the pursuit. Yet, when she summoned him and told him that the old days were ended, and offered him that reward which he had so often asked, Monsieur Auguste Dion picked up his hat, glanced in dismay about the room, stripped of its silver and rich ornaments, and, backing, presently found himself backing away down Louis Street, and facing a closed door.

"After that, Mademoiselle Thiboult was rarely seen abroad. She stayed home with her father, now in his last illness.

"Meanwhile Monsieur Duchaine had prospered in Montreal, and now, after two years, he was returning to render an accounting to his brother Jean. Jean, by attending to business while Quebec danced, was growing rich, and he was even then negotiating for a house on Louis Street, just inside the wall. His family has lived there for three generations now: the despised furrier, Monsieur, became the ancestor of some of our best families, as is often the way. Paul arrived late in the afternoon, and, having won unstinted praise from Jean, left him at his books and went out toward the Upper Town. It was not until he saw the frozen river that he remembered that this was almost the anniversary of his departure.

"He was to go back next morning, and an irresistible impulse had drawn him to the scene of his love and his humiliation. He meant to mingle with the throng, if possible to set eyes upon Marguérite, and then to go. The image of the false woman whom he had loved had never left him. Yet, false though she was, and wanton, and incapable both of love and truth, he loved her; and he knew that he would bear that love within his breast until he died.

"There was no carnival that year, but here and there, grouped about the ice, a few had gathered, drawn thither by the memory of former days, to warm their hearts at the pale fire of the recollection of earlier joys. With his cloak drawn closely about him, to shut out the penetrating wind, Paul approached one of the clusters, and presently saw Auguste Dion among the rest.

"Paul, though he felt all his old loathing of the man revive, could not withdraw until he had heard Marguérite's name. It was not long before it was spoken.

"'*Ma foi*, what changes!' exclaimed one speaker. 'Only last year Mademoiselle Thiboult was queening it here, and look at her now! That was a bitter fall, Monsieur Dion. Who would have thought the girl had so many enemies, ready to spring up like armed men as soon as—'

"'They are not more numerous than the hearts she broke,' a second said.

"Auguste Dion laughed coarsely and hurled an unmentionable insult at her. 'Aye, and I know,' he cried, 'for I was her first lover and she my mistress—'

"'You lie!' cried Paul, and hurled himself through the group. He raised his hand and struck Monsieur Dion across the cheek. 'You lie!' said Paul, more quietly, again.

"Auguste Dion staggered back beneath the force of the blow; then he strode forward, his eyes blazing. But as he caught sight of his enemy's face, his jaw dropped, and he stared blankly at him.

"'*Diable!* The furrier!' he muttered.

"'You have lied about Mademoiselle Thiboult,' said Paul. 'You cannot affirm that lie and live. Do you understand, Monsieur, or must I strike you again?'

"The rest had come between them, but there was no love lost for Auguste. Coarse-mouthed themselves, many of them, and not too scrupulous, all felt that Monsieur Dion had been guilty of a worse betrayal than they.

"'Well, Monsieur Dion, that was plainly enough spoken,' said the man who had defended Mademoiselle. 'Surely you understand.'

"'A furrier,' muttered Auguste, fidgeting with his hands.

"'Still, Monsieur—' the other began to urge, and led him aside. A third man approached Paul.

"'I have the pleasure of addressing Monsieur Duchaine?' he asked. '*Grâce de Dieu*, I remembered you; your name was a proverb in all our mouths for nearly a week after you left us. Well, Monsieur, the sun rises behind the Cita-

del at eight. I can meet you there then, just by the western outworks. You have business in town?"

"I was to return to Montreal tomorrow," Paul answered.

"Then give orders that the sleigh be ready at dawn," replied the other. "I will call for you at half-past seven o'clock, which will be better." He handed Paul his card.

"Long before Paul had returned to

and he went down, to find Paul, booted and dressed, about to enter. Upon the seat, where the driver should have been, was Monsieur Gagnon, Paul's friend.

"*Au revoir, mon frère,*" said Jean, kissing him. "Thou must return next year, and for a longer stay."

"*Au revoir, Jean,*" answered Paul, and stepped into the vehicle. Then the horses strained their way up the precipitous streets toward the Upper Town.



"Mademoiselle's hands found Paul's. 'Monsieur Duchaine!' she gasped. 'It was for me—'"

his brother's house the tongues were busy all through Quebec.

"Jean Duchaine, although he was surprised at the early hour that his brother had chosen for his departure, made no objection. After all, it would enable a good part of the journey to be covered in a single day. At half-past seven the noise of the sleigh-bells awakened him,

"The sleigh crossed the Place d'Armes, skirted Louis Street, crossed Mont Carmel, and traversed what is now Ste. Genevieve. And now the bare and shot-furrowed slope of the citadel was seen. It towered above them toward the summit of the mighty fortress, till Quebec dwindled in the distance below. Near the summit of the glacis the sleigh

stopped, and Monsieur Gagnon descended from his seat. "They are already here, Monsieur Duchaine," he said.

"Paul stepped down, and at that moment the edge of the sun thrust itself over the citadel, bathing the frosty air in an effulgence of yellow light. It painted the white walls of the habitations far below and drove the night mists whirling down the St. Lawrence westward. It cleared Paul's brain, too. The sudden advent of the situation had numbed his faculties, and all night he had lain in a stupor, incredulous that such joy was to be his as to fight for the honor of that love which filled his heart. But now he understood quite clearly that it was true, and that a weightier thing than the lives of himself and of Auguste Dion was to be put to the proving.

"Monsieur Gagnon saluted the party that was lined up twelve paces away. At Paul's feet was a half obliterated groove in the soil; Paul stepped behind it and took the pistol which his friend placed in his hand. 'Aim low,' whispered Monsieur Gagnon. 'Fire at the word *three*. His hand is trembling, but yours is firm and steady, Monsieur.'

"There is more need that mine be firm," Paul answered.

"He could see the whites of Auguste Dion's eyes, and the wavering pistol mouth; but he could see also that a carriage was speeding along Louis Street, far beneath him, and making for the gate. The horses, galloping, seemed to grow larger momentarily as they sped up the hillside.

"Messieurs," said a tall surgeon, 'you will understand—'

"The seconds had seen the vehicle and had taken alarm.

"Messieurs, no time must be wasted," said Monsieur Dion's friend. "There are meddlesome persons in Quebec. Come! You are ready? Will you give the word, Monsieur Gagnon?"

"One," counted Monsieur Gagnon, and the carriage bounded furiously over the stones and boulders. It had left the city behind and was directing its course almost vertically upward toward the Citadel. There was no longer doubt as to its destination.

"Two,"—and the carriage drew near and stopped, and a woman descended.

"Three!" A puff of smoke appeared at the mouth of Auguste's pistol, and Paul, watching it, saw it expand into a swelling cloud that rolled toward him, obscuring the faces of the seconds and that of the tall surgeon; then out of it appeared the hooded face of Marguerite Thibault, and her body, shaken with grief, and her groping, outstretched hands. Then the air had grown clear, and the bare hillside was disclosed, and Auguste Dion, flat on his face.

"Mademoiselle's hands found Paul's. 'Monsieur Duchaine!' she gasped. 'It was for me—'

"Paul put her aside gently and strode toward Auguste. The tall surgeon was turning him over. The ball had passed through his thigh.

"Monsieur Dion," said Monsieur Gagnon sternly, 'we are waiting for you.'

"Auguste lifted his pale face toward Paul. 'I will tell you the truth, Monsieur,' he gasped.

"It is not necessary, Monsieur—from you," said Paul. And suddenly his heart leaped up with joy, for he knew at last that he had neither believed in his own doubts or doubted where he thought he had believed.

"Mademoiselle!" said Paul, offering her his arm.

"The carriage and the sleigh were drawn up side by side, but at the carriage step both halted and looked into each other's eyes, and each read there that which made speech necessary no more. In that instant Paul understood everything, and all the past seemed like the whirling smoke-clouds from Auguste Dion's pistol-mouth, through which his love shone, radiant and pure.

"Paul placed her in the sleigh and took the reins. He wrapped his cloak about her. Lightly, for the first time, their lips met. The horses started.

"Behind, staring incredulously after them, stood the little group on the bare hillside. Before lay Montreal and the future, and the life together. So Paul's faith had proved victorious over doubts, and nothing was said or needed to be said. I like to think of that especially, Monsieur."

The Horned Owl

THE LATEST STORY
FROM "THE OLD MASTER"

IN a rocking chair fashioned of hickory saplings, the Colonel was sitting on the lawn of his beautiful old blue-grass farm up the Kentucky River. Advancing slowly toward him came his daughter Medie, graceful tangoist, wide eyes glowing like the sun-warmed velvet of the wild passion flower. Off near the briery hedge hung a white-flanneled young fellow, nibbling the lip of anxiety.

"Father, Mr. Burnsey wishes to speak to you."

"Burnsey? Who's he?"

"Why, the young man whom I met before I left the academy, the tennis prize winner and, moreover, the poet. There he is over by the hedge. Percy, oh, Percy," she called, and hastened away, leaving the tennis-playing versifier to fight it out alone. Gracefully picking his way he approached the old man.

"Sit down, Mr. Burns," said the Colonel, nodding toward a camp-stool.

"Burnsey," he corrected the Colonel, seating himself.

"How's that?"

"I say my name is Burnsey."

"Very good; I have no objections whatever. Fine day."

"Ah, yes, as fresh as if it were the first morn to flash upon the virgin earth."

The old man looked at him, lips slightly drawn apart, in the attitude of a dog about to snap at a bee. He waited.

"Colonel, I have called here a number of times, and although I have been introduced to you twice, I have not had the pleasure of much converse with you, nor have I had the opportunity to speak my appreciation of this, the most romantic spot I have ever known. The river, on whose shore solitary Boone stood gazing in melancholy rapture, glees its broad laughter in the sun, then sprawls to dream beneath your trees. The—"

"Wait a minute. I believe that con-

"OPIE READ writes like a congenial friend sitting down to tell you a story that has won his interest,"

founded calf is about to lift the garden gate off the hinges."

The Colonel got up, gazing, but satisfied that the threat of calamity had passed, sat down again. Medie was picking among the roses at the corner of the house. She turned about to give to the poet a smile of encouragement. He needed it. The Colonel spoke.

"My daughter says you want to see me. Anything special?"

"Yes, Colonel, as special as the cry of a soul out of the dark uncertainty. Colonel, once you were young—"

"And could jump a ten-railed fence. Yes sir."

The poet bowed to this remembered achievement. "And as a man of sentiment, Colonel, you knew what it was to love desperately."

"Yes, think I did—went a whole week without eating a bite, though water-melons were in season. And that reminds me. Medie, tell Dan to fetch us a water-melon."

"Oh, Father, how can you?" came from the girl; and the young man sighed. He would try again.

"Colonel, you will please pardon my seeming boldness, but I love—"

"That confounded calf is still hanging around the gate."

"Colonel, please listen to me. I love your daughter."

The old man looked at him. "You do, eh? Well, I can't help that, but I tell you what I can help. I can help you to keep away from here. I can give you some inducements that I believe will appeal to you."

"Keep away from here, Colonel? Impossible."

"Oh, is it? Well now just let me tell you something, and I am going to be

By Opie Read

ILLUSTRATED BY
FREDERICK RICHARDSON

said one of his reviewers; and it is a better-than-ever Opie Read who is writing these days.

very quiet about it. Of course I knew what you were trying to get at, and with my interruptions I was giving you a chance to repent, get off the subject and stay off, but you decline to take advantage of kindly offered opportunity. On a strain I can put up with a good deal of the poet that may or may not be within you, and with a little harder strain I can put up with some little of your tennis playing, but I can't put up with the fact that you are a weakling, sir. I—"

"Beg pardon, Colonel, but let me interrupt you a moment. What we are going through now is a drama as old as those purple hills over yonder. It has been enacted millions of times, and nearly always the end is the same. I love your daughter, and she loves me; and that ought to settle it."

The hairs on the Colonel's brow stuck out tremulously like the feelers of a granddaddy longlegs. "Young man, at this moment I am reminded of a saying of my old friend Colonel William Lightfoot Visscher, of this our great state of Kaintucky, sir—that love may laugh at locksmiths but not at gunsmiths. You never saw love tittering at a gunsmith, did you, Mr. Barnum?"

"Again I must remind you that my name is Burnsey. Is it common in this part of the country that a man has such difficulty in committing to memory the name of a prospective son-in-law?"

"Young man," said the Colonel, his hawk-eye sweeping the landscape and then fastening with dangerous gaze upon the poet, "there is a short cut to this business, and now I am going to take it." He looked toward the girl, who in happy expectancy was kissing the roses, stealing dew from one and giving it to a

rival sister. "You are not going to marry my daughter. The man who marries her must have the personality to hold in subjection a plantation worked by buck niggers stronger than gorillas, sir. You are not that man and never can be. You haven't got nerve enough to shuck an oyster. Wait a moment."

The poet had raised a protesting hand, flashing a tennis jewel won on the court at Mary and Louisa College. "Your rebellious spirit, or rather your resentful weakness, may prompt you to say that Medié will run away with you, but she will not do that; but even if she should I'd follow you across the brow of the world and—and horsewhip you in the throne-room of the devil himself, sir."

"Colonel, you surely wouldn't do that," the poet moaned, white as his flannel jacket.

"Wouldn't I? And making the short cut still shorter, if I ever catch you on this place again I'll have the niggers hold you till I raw-hide your white clothes into whitewash. Hah, you just ask any man in this neighborhood, and he'll tell you that I will surely keep my word. Ask my daughter, sir. Medié," he called, "Mr. What's-his-name wants to ask you a question."

The girl came running, the long stems of plucked roses clinging to her skirt. The Colonel got up and walked slowly away, hands behind him, hawk-eye bent upon the sward.

"What is it—" And then she burst out with "Oh, Percy!" Upon his white raiment she put her hands, groomed him with love's inspiring touch, but Percy did not appear to be inspired. He looked as if he needed a vacation, a sojourn at the springs: she cooed up to him, and but for the Colonel, now leaning against a tree, looking, she would have kissed him.

"Percy—look into my eyes, my soul—what is it you wish to ask? But why should you ask me anything? Instead,



"What is it—"
And then she
burst out with
"Oh, Percy!"
But Percy did not

appear to be inspired. He looked as if he needed a vacation.

why don't you tell me the glorious news? Percy, speak to me!"

"Yes, dear," Percy managed to say.

"I hope he didn't say anything to hurt your feelings, you dear sensitive thing! Did he?"

"Did he! Says he'll raw-hide me if I ever come on this place again. Say anything! And he wanted me to ask you if he wouldn't keep his word."

"Oh!" She wept away from him, wept herself to the old man. "Father, how can you—"

He took her in his arms. "There, now, don't cry. In a day or two we will laugh over it as a good joke. He's too much of a weakling to know what love is. Why, a throb of real love would break him in two. You must

have a strong man for your husband, a man we can both be proud of. Don't sob so, Medie; it will all come right. I am acting for your good, and before long you'll realize it. There now."

She wet-eyed her way back to the drooping poet. "We must wait till my mother returns, and perhaps she can help us. She'll be home in two weeks from now."

"But heavens, is my soul to pant athirst without seeing you until then?"

"We'll find a way," she said.

II

FOR a day or two Medie whimpered sad airs out of the piano. Then she brightened with a waltz, and the wise old Colonel smiled upon her, grateful to his own mind for its master stroke of diplomacy. He told her that in the future he was going to devote himself more to her pleasure, that on the following Sunday he would take her to the baptizing at Mt. Zion and later to the races at Lexington.

One evening when there were stars but no moon to blight a sweet and darkling project, Medie loitered beneath a low-spreading maple at the corner of the yard. From behind a thorn hedge came Percy, protect-

ingly garbed in black. For a few heavenly moments she wept in his arms, and then they sat on the sward, beneath the low-spreading tree.

"Percy, I thought you would never come."

"I came, precious, as soon as it was safe."

A hymn arose from a negro cabin not far away. Percy listened, and then he said: "And to think that the singer of that plaintive air would willingly hold me for your father's whip. Music though sweet and low is not always tender."

"Oh, Percy, you're so poetic."

"Yes, but what avails it when I cannot have you? To-day I saw a laborer, a giant unconscious of half his strength; and I said to myself, 'I would give all my finer qualities for a moiety of your brutish power. I—'"

"But Percy, dear, possessed of only physical force you could not have won me." And soothed with her fallacy, he reconciled himself with his superiority of mind.

"I wish your father recognized mind."

"Oh, he does, political mind. You know in the country here there are only two minds, political mind and preacher mind. Why can't you—merciful heavens, Percy, here comes Father. Don't try to run—he'll see you and set the negroes after you. Here, up in the tree—quick!"

In a moment he was swallowed up amid the thick leaves, and the girl turned about to face her father. He came walking slowly with his heavy cane, and under an arm he carried a pillow.

"It is so hot that I can't sleep in the house, Medie, so I thought I'd lie here on the grass beneath the tree."

"No, no, Father, you'll take cold. And besides, it's going to rain."

"Not out of that sky unless it rains stars." He dropped the pillow and sat down with his back against the tree. "I'll just sit here an hour or so, and then I'll stretch out."

"Father, I am afraid to have you lie out here. Come into the house, and I'll fan you asleep."

"No, I'd rather stay here. Charming night, Medie. It reminds me of the night I asked your mother to be my wife. We were out at old Ebenezer camp-ground,

and just after hearing a most powerful sermon on the immortality of love we went out into the woods and sat down on a moss-covered log, and—"

"Father, you are getting hoarse, and I just know you'll catch your death of cold."

"I'm all right, I tell you. This is the most comfortable place I've found in a week. Ah, I tell you I was a powerful man in those days. I had thrown Nate Bowers, champion rassler of Woodford County, and your mother had tied a blue ribbon on my arm. I was none of your white-fanneled moth-catchers, I tell you. I—"

Down from among the leaves came a short sigh. "What was that?" the Colonel inquired.

"Nothing, Father—only a bird in the tree."

"I'll bet it's that infernal horned owl again. And he's got his eye on one of my game roosters. Go to the house and fetch the shot-gun and I'll fire up there and bring him down. Hurry up."

"I'm—I'm afraid of the gun."

"Afraid of it when you shot ducks with me all last fall! Ah, that's what comes of associating with that weakling. My daughter afraid of a gun! If I ever catch him passing along the road in front of this house I'll score him to the red. Go to the house and fetch that gun."

Weak-ankled, she set out to obey, and then as if there had come the grace of a hopeful thought she hastened on her way. The old man stood, stick in hand, gazing up into the tree. There was no way for Percy to get down except within reach of the Colonel, for behind was a thorn hedge and to drop into it would tear him to pieces. And if he should by agility dodge the heavy cane and run, the negroes, set after him like hounds, would catch him and bring him back!

"I hear you up there, you horned imp of Satan," spoke the Colonel. "Carried off my prize rooster and scattered his feathers down the pike, did you? We'll see whose feathers are going to be scattered now."

Medie was calling him. "Father, I can't find the gun anywhere."

"Can't find it! Why, confound it, don't you know it's in the rack over the sitting-

room door? You ought to know it—been there for thirty years."

"Well, it's not there now. Come help me hunt for it, please."

"Not there? That beats anything I ever heard of!" And the Colonel struck a trot for the house.

Medie met him at the door, drew him into the sitting-room, and pointing to the rack she said: "I don't see how you can say it's always there when you see it isn't."

The old man gazed in astonishment. "I've had a good deal of experience in my day, but this beats anything I ever saw. It couldn't fly away like a horned owl. Come, help me look for it."

"But I don't know where to look," she protested. "Let me go back and watch the owl."

"No, you'll scare him away. Come help me look for that gun. Hah," he burst out, "I'll bet that scoundrel Barnard has stolen it to weaken me against his infamy."

"What fellow Barnard, Father?"

"Why, that confounded weakling that wants to marry you."

"Oh, you mean Mr. Burnsey. Well, he just didn't, anything of the sort. He's as brave as a lion and wouldn't stoop to such a littleness."

"Brave!" The old man laughed. "Brave! A sick dove could run him off the bluff into the river. Now what the deuce could have become of that gun?"

He began to look about for it, into corners, on the mantle-shelf, under the bed. He opened a closet door.

"It couldn't have got in there," she said; but it had, and there he saw it, sticking out from under a pile of old clothes. "How in thunder it got in here will always be one of the world's mysteries," the Colonel swore, dragging the gun out. "And now Mr. Horned Owl, I'll pay my delayed respects to you."

Medie went with him to the tree, tremulous, stopping up her ears when the Colonel raised the gun to shoot. Both barrels spurted forth their bellowing flame, and down came a shower of leaves. The old man looked about on the ground, on top of the thorn hedge. "I guess he flew away before I found the gun," he said.

Down the road a young fellow slackened his pace to a walk, took off his hat and mopped his beady brow.

III

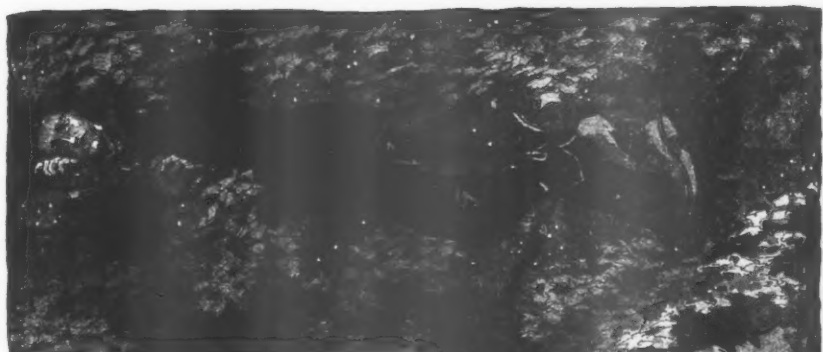
THREE days and three nights passed, and so far as the Colonel was aware the horned owl had not returned. It was the old man's habit twice a week to walk into the town, four miles distant, and to walk home in the evening for exercise. A mile from his home his pathway wound about in a piece of heavy woods skirting the river. He had spent a happy afternoon among old cronies, telling at stories never completed; he had beaten old Dave Jennings at chess, winning a hound pup to be delivered on the following day; and as he struck into the timber land, walking not with an old man's restricted step but with long and easy stride, a camp-meeting hymn swelled forth from him and floated away on the gentle air softly murmuring among the trees. Suddenly a gruff voice commanded him to halt and to throw up his hands. He halted, unable to give full credit to his own ears. A low moon silver-streaked the forest, and in striving to seek out the brusque intruder upon his sacred song he stood gazing; and there in a small open space towered three tall men with white masks covering their faces.

"What do you want? I have no money with me."

And a croaking voice made answer: "We scorn your money but we demand your life. We have stood your political interference long enough, and now you must die. Is there any word you want to leave before we fire the fatal shot?"

"You hellions, if I only had a pistol, I—"

Then from behind came a voice: "Stand aside, Colonel. Let me at the scoundrels." And some one rushed swiftly by, the moon glinting his steel. Three tongues of fire, three shots, but the rescuer did not falter; he poured out the wrath of his pistol, rushing the murderers. Two of them fled to the right of the path, the other one to the left toward the river, the rescuer hot after him, firing as he ran. Now came a loud cry,



off in the bushes, and then the rescuer stepped back into the road.

"Colonel," he said, bowing, "I have got one of them. Come with me and let us look for him."

The old man began to splutter. "Why, this is Mr.— Mr.—"

"Burnsey," answered Percy.

"Why, God bless you, sir, I—"

"But come and let us find the dead villain."

The Colonel kept up his exclamations of astonishment, following Percy, who, striking matches as he advanced, began to examine the ground. And there on the dead leaves they saw the villain's blood, streaking toward the river.

"Got one of the wolves, as sure as gun's iron," the old man swore. "And my boy, on your part it was the gamest fight I ever saw."

"It was a mere dip back into the



Down from among the leaves came a short sigh. "What was that?" the Colonel inquired. "Nothing, Father: only a bird in the tree." "I'll bet it's that infernal horned owl again. And he's got his eye on one of my game roosters. Go to the house and fetch the shot-gun, and I'll fire up there and bring him down. Hurry up."

past," said Percy, still striking matches to illumine the bloody trail. "I lived in the West when a sombrero flung rudely in the face was more common than a prayer-book thrust gently into the hand."

"You don't say!"

"Yes. Ah, here's where he plunged into the river, and now he is a floater far down the current. Well, we've done all we can for him. Shall we go, Colonel?"

"Yes. Will you let me shake hands with you, sir?"

High with left hand Percy held a burning match while with his right he gripped the old man hard. Then back to the path they found their way, the brush-entangled moon throwing lace beam: on the ground; and in silence they walked until, leaving the shadow land, they came out into the broad turnpike that led past the Colonel's house, up among the purple hills.

"Not to exercise my political rights!" the old man said. "A fine state of affairs. I'll have my rights, sir, even if I have to trundle a Gatling gun in front of me like a wheelbarrow. And, sir, I'll send an account of to-night's outrage to Henry Watter-son."

"Let me entreat you not to do that, Colonel. The fact is, I'd rather that nothing be said about it at all. It would serve no purpose whatever and would cause us both considerable embarrassment."

"My dear boy, you have saved my life and you may command me. Nothing shall be said."

"I thank you. The fact is, Colonel, that I am trying to correct certain reports that have been circulated concerning me, and I wish to take this opportunity to say to you that it is not true that I wantonly picked a quarrel with Bill Wick, the bad man of Montana, so that I might shoot him. The fact is he

forced the quarrel on me by sneering at a poor widow passing along the street. I remonstrated with him as you yourself would have, and then came the shooting. Nor is it true, Colonel, that I led the lawless gang that shot up Silver City, New Mexico. The fact is I headed the law-and-order force that drove the ruffians from the town. Those reports—"

"I have not heard them," the Colonel broke in, "and if I do, I will correct them with all the force of my character, sir."

"Colonel, I thank you profoundly, sir. You lift a load off my mind."

Now they were almost abreast the old man's yard gate. Here was the thorn hedge, the tree wherein the horned owl had taken shelter. The poet made



Then from behind came a voice: "Stand aside, Colonel. Let me at the scoundrels." And some one rushed swiftly by, the moon glinting his steel.

straight on with no hint of stopping, but the old man plucked at his sleeve, halted him and said: "You must do me the honor of entering my devoted home, sir. You must give my daughter the opportunity to thank you."

The poet hung back. "I am afraid it would excite her, sir."

"Excite her! She is of my blood sir; she is game. Come."

Medie, hearing footsteps, opened the door, and seeing Percy with the old man she cried out in affright, "Oh, Father, please don't horse-whip him!"

"Horse-whip him!" the Colonel shouted. "Andrew Jackson never saw the day he could do that. My dear, this hero has saved my life."

"Oh, Percy!"

"Fought and killed as burly a villain as ever infested the earth. My dear boy, sit down and make yourself at home."

Percy sat down, the girl hovering near him. "It was nothing, Medie," he said. "I was sitting beside the road, heard some wretches talking and—well, armed myself and—"

"Proved yourself as true a hero as trod bloody earth at Shiloh," put in the Colonel.

"Oh, Percy!" She hauled him out of his chair, tangoed him over to a table and joyously boxed his jaws with a thin, lavender volume of her own poems.

"Percy!"

"Yes, Colonel."

"You can manage any set of niggers on any plantation on the face of this earth. Good night."

The poet and the girl sat down. "Poor Dad!" she said. "But it had to be done, didn't it, dear?"

He left his "Yes" on her lips.

"And you got through with it all right, didn't you?"

"Considering the fact that I never fired off a pistol before, I ate it up," said the poet.

"And the red ink worked all right?"

"To perfection. And the fellows played their part—what's that?" he broke off, a hoarse cry arising from without.

"It's the horned owl," she laughed.

Another Star Writer for you!
 "Back to Baltimore"
 By Ring W. Lardner

A baseball story by the man who has won the biggest laugh of the year with his stories of the Bush Leagues,

Will be in the November
 Red Book Magazine

The Missing Mister Master



By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs is Pigs," etc.

A new exploit of Philo Gubb, graduate (in twelve complete lessons) of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting.

ILLUSTRATED BY REA IRVIN

PHILO GUBB, the Correspondence School detective, sat on the edge of his cot bed, in his office on the second floor of the Opera House Block, and studied Lesson XI of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting's course of lessons.

The hour was ten at night, and the silence was dense. Indeed, Mr. Gubb was the only living person in the Opera House Block building. The floor above was that devoted to the stage and auditorium of the Opera House itself, used—since the erection of the Regal Gem Theatre—but twice each year—once for the High School graduation exercises and once for the Annual Rally and Campfire, Phineas Deutsch Camp 786, G. A. R. The ground floor was split into stores—P. C. Hagemeyer's dry-goods emporium and Scott & Plipp, hats and haberdashery, fronting on Main Street;

the Riverbank National Bank occupied the corner, and Hobermelz, the harness dealer, fronted on the Avenue. These were all deserted, as a rule, before seven o'clock at night.

The second floor, on which Mr. Gubb had his office, was not always deserted at night. Sometimes a poker game went on in one of the offices that edged the corridor; sometimes one of the lawyers, with a knotty case and a crying baby at home, burned the midnight kerosene; but as a rule Philo Gubb had the floor to himself. He was the only professional man to sleep in his office during sleeping hours. Some of the young lawyers slept quite undisturbed during the hot afternoons, but that is a different matter. Philo Gubb had a cot bed, with suitable bedclothes.

He now sat on the edge of his cot, minus his coat, vest and trousers, and

with his bare feet comfortably extended. At his back, a kerosene lamp stood in a wall bracket; a pillow behind him made a back-rest, and a bundle of wall paper served as a rather lofty footstool. He was deeply immersed in Lesson XI, his bird-like face screwed into tensility. From time to time he wiggled one toe or another as a fly alighted on it. Sometimes, when more than one fly alighted on his toes at once, he wiggled all ten toes at once.

The office of Philo Gubb was unlike any other office in Riverbank. If you opened the door of any of the offices on the second floor of the Opera House Building, you saw desks and chairs, or office tables and chairs, or dentists' operating chairs and cabinets, or cases of law books. If you paused before the door bearing the sign "P. Gubb; Detecting and Decorating," and opened the door, you saw a small room littered almost knee-deep with long, serpentine strips of paper, trimmed off the edges of wall-paper rolls. Like islands of rocks flooded by this papery sea, there were bundles of wall paper, galvanized paste pails, a barrel of wet paste, a trimming table with a rotary trimmer attached, empty boxes on which were laid paste and paint brushes, paint pails and all the junk of a paper-hanger's business. A trunk, a varnished oak wash-stand and a cot showed that the room was not only a decorator's shop, but a living place; and that this was the office of Philo Gubb, detective, was shown by a row of hooks from which hung various disguises used by the celebrated detective, by a portrait of William J. Burns, cut from a magazine and pasted on the wall, and by a placard which read, "P. Gubb, Graduate and Diploma-ist of the Rising Sun Detective Agency's Correspondence School of Detecting. Detecting done by the Day or Job. Terms on Application." The diploma of the school, neatly framed, hung on one wall just over a chart showing the sixty-eight tints and hues obtainable in the Kalsopaint Cold Water Kalsomines.

On the cot at Philo Gubb's side as he studied the Lesson XI, lay a copy of that day's morning Chicago paper, with a two-column spread headline reading,

"Wife Offers \$5000 Reward," and it was this that had driven Philo Gubb, the paper-hanger detective, to renewed study of Lesson XI—"Procedure in Abduction and Missing Men Cases."

Mr. Custer Master, of Chicago, had mysteriously disappeared. For a week the Chicago police had sought him in vain. Now his wife had offered a liberal reward to whoever discovered Mr. Master's whereabouts. One paragraph in the article had caught Mr. Gubb's particular attention:

Mrs. Master feels that her husband is still alive, and she indignantly refutes any suggestion that his body will be found in the lake or the river. While she steadfastly refuses the giving of any reason, she insists that Mr. Master will be found in one of the Iowa towns on the Mississippi River. The police of these towns have been notified, and detectives have gone to investigate. The Masters stand high in South-Side society. Mr. Master, it is understood, recently inherited \$450,000 from a maternal uncle. At the time the will was probated considerable interest was aroused by the fact that the legacy was to go to Mr. Master only on condition that he carried out certain provisions contained in a sealed envelope, to be read only by the executors and Mr. Master.

And so on. There was much more of it. The Master Mystery—as the papers called it—came at a dull season, and the reporters made the most of it. They pointed out that Mr. Master had been a sufferer from dyspepsia for many years, but this had not had a permanently depressing effect on his mind. His home relations were most satisfactory. His own business—he was a dealer in laundry supplies and laundry machinery—was doing well, and no trace of outside troubles could be discovered.

On the morning of his disappearance, Mr. Master had shown some signs of mental eccentricity. A neighbor, happening to be at her window, saw Mr. Master come hurriedly from the door of his house. He was not fully clad. In fact, he carried his linen collar, his tie and his coat and vest in his hands.

"Custer! Custer! Come back!" his wife had called, but Mr. Master had fled down the street, putting on his collar as he fled.

An hour later a friend passed him as he was standing on a corner six blocks from Mr. Master's home. Mr. Master seemed greatly distressed.

"I can't do it! It kills me; I can't do it!" he was muttering to himself. "I never could do it. I said so."

The next news of Mr. Master was gained from the keeper of a bath-house and swimming-pool known as the Imperial Natatorium. About ten o'clock, Mr. Master entered the Natatorium hurriedly, asked the price of baths and chose to pay for a plunge in the big swimming-pool. He paid in advance, removed his garments in one of the small dressing-rooms, put on a swimming suit and went to the edge of the big pool. Here he grasped the rail and extended one foot until his toes touched the cold water, when he uttered a cry, rushed to the dressing-room and, as soon as he had thrown on his clothes, dashed from the building. That was the last trace of Mr. Master in Chicago. Since then his fate had been a mystery.

Philo Gubb, having finished reading Lesson XI for the third time, picked up the Chicago paper and was halfway through the Master Mystery article again, when the silence of the Opera House Building was disturbed by the sound of feet ascending the brass-clad stairs. The feet seemed to be treading as lightly as possible, and Philo Gubb judged there were two pairs of feet. Of this he became sure when they began their journey along the corridor.

These nocturnal visitors seemed unacquainted with the building, for after two or three steps had been taken, some one lighted a match. Philo Gubb could hear the grating of the match-head on the box and the brief flaring of the igniting chemicals. Then—one, two, three steps, and another match was lighted. One, two, three—another match. It was evident to the detective that these visitors were reading the names on the doors as

they progressed along the corridor, and he was about to extinguish his lamp and prepare for the worst, when the two men stopped again, struck a match and, after an instant's hesitation, rapped sharply upon his door.

"Come in!" called Philo Gubb, at the same time drawing his bed-sheet over his scantily-clad legs. He knotted the sheet behind, like an apron, and arose to greet the comers. There were two. One of them Mr. Gubb recognized at once; he was Billy Gribble, proprietor of the Gold Star Hand Laundry, just across the way on Main Street. The other man was a stranger.

Under his arm, Billy Gribble carried a long, cylin-

drical parcel enclosed in heavy wrapping paper. The parcel was about six feet long and nearly as large around as Billy Gribble himself, but it did not seem heavy. Under his other arm, Billy Gribble carried a second parcel. This was about three feet square and soft and light, as evidenced by the ease with which Billy Gribble carried it and by the manner in which his arm pressed into



He extended one foot till his toes touched the cold water, when he uttered a cry.

it. The trained eye of Detective Gubb noted all this at a glance. Billy Gribble dropped the two parcels on the floor.

"Gubby, old sport!" he said in his sloppily noisy way, "this is—"

"Now, now!" said the stranger irritably. "Now, wait! I said I would talk to him, didn't I? What do you mean by—if you'll please let—you are Detective Gubb, are you not?" he asked.

Philo Gubb gazed at the man. The man was tall and thin, taller and thinner than Mr. Gubb himself. He was clean shaven and his face showed deep lines about the mouth and nose. His hair was closely clipped, making his head seem pea-like in its smallness. But Mr. Gubb was not gazing at these things. His bird-like eyes were fastened on the end of the suit-case the stranger still held in his hand. On the end of the case were painted in black the letters "C.M." and the word "Chicago." The stranger glanced down at the suit-case and put it on the floor with a suddenness that brought forth a thumping sound.

"Clue!" he said, and he kicked the suit-case.

"I presume the honor of this call at this late hour of time," said Philo Gubb, shifting his sheet a little, "is on a matter of business. If it is of a social, society sort, I'll have to ask to be kindly excused whilst I assume my pants."

"Business call, business call entirely, Mr. Gubb," said the tall stranger. "Don't put anything on. If—if you feel embarrassed I'll take some off. My name is—is—"

"Phineas Burke," said Billy Gribble, in a loud whisper.

"Can't you keep still?" asked the stranger crossly. "Don't you think I know my own name? Phineas—that's my name, and I know it as well as you do. Phineas Burns."

"Burke, not Burns," whispered Billy Gribble.

The stranger turned red with exasperation.

"Look here! Don't I know my own name?" he asked angrily. "My name is Phineas Burns."

"All right! All right!" said Billy Gribble. "Have it your own way. You ought to know. Only—you said Burke

over at my place. I know, because I said I had a cousin named Burke. I haven't any cousin named Burns."

Mr. Burke-Burns glared at Billy Gribble.

"Now! There now!" he cried. "Just for that I'll tell you you don't know anything about it. My name isn't Burke, and it isn't Burns. It's—it's Charles Augustus Witzel. Mr. Gubb, my name is Charles Augustus Witzel."

"Glad to know your acquaintance, sir," said Philo Gubb. "Wont you be seated upon one of them bundles of wall paper?"

"I'm a detective," said Mr. Charles Augustus Witzel. "Tell him about me, Gribble."

"Well, he—whatever his name is, but Burke was what he told me—is a Chicago detective," said Billy Gribble. "Yes, sir, Mr. Gubb, Mr.—ah, what is it?"

"Witzel," said Mr. Witzel.

"Mr. Witzel is one of the celebrated-est Chicago detectives," said Mr. Gribble, "and he's come over here to hunt up this man Master that's disappeared. Aint that right? That's right! So over here he comes, because he has a clue handed to him straight by Mrs. Master that Master is in Riverbank or along the river here somewhere. See? So when he strikes town he comes straight to me. Why? Because I'm in the laundry business, and Master is in the laundry-supply and washing-machine business. That's how it is, aint it?"

"Ex-act-ly!" said Mr. Witzel.

"Yes, sir," said Billy Gribble. "So he comes to my laundry, and I'm in the washroom—"

"You aint!" said Mr. Witzel. "You're out, and you know you're out!"

"And I'm out," said Billy Gribble. "Maybe I was in the washroom and went out the back way. Anyway, I'm out. Say," he said, as Mr. Witzel squirmed, "if you don't like the way I'm telling this, tell it yourself."

"I entered Mr. Gribble's laundry," said Mr. Witzel. "You'll understand, being a detective, Mr. Gubb, I entered the laundry. Here is the counter. I walked up to the counter. I leaned over and spoke to the girl there. 'My dear

young lady,' I said, 'is Mr. Gribble in?' 'Out,' she says. 'When will he be back?' I asked, and moved along. Counter here. I'm here, she's there. I move along here. My toe hit something. Naturally, I looked down. A detective observes everything. My toe has hit a suit-case. On the end of the suit-case are the initials 'C. M.' and 'Chicago.' In other words, 'Custer Master, Chicago,'—the man I'm looking for."

"And did you get him?" asked Philo Gubb, tensely.

"Gone! Gone like a bird!" said Mr. Witzel. "Naturally, I said nothing about the suit-case to the young lady. I waited for Gribble. I questioned Gribble. I asked him if Mr. Master had been there—"

"Hold on!" said Mr. Gribble, and then, "Oh, all right!"

"And he said 'No,'" said Mr. Witzel, frowning. "'Very well,' I said to Gribble, 'he'll be back. He'll come back after the suit-case.' So Gribble hid me in his private office. I waited."

"And he came back?" asked Mr. Gubb eagerly.

"He did not," said Mr. Witzel. Philo Gubb sighed with relief.

"Then I've got a chance at an opportunity to get that five thousand dollars," he said.

"Mr. Gubb," said Mr. Witzel, "you have a chance to get twenty-five hundred. You have the best chance in the world to get it. It was to offer you the chance to get twenty-five hundred that I came here. What did I say to you, Gribble?"

"You go ahead and tell it, if you want it told," said Gribble. "You don't like the way I tell things. Tell 'em yourself."

"I said to Gribble," said Mr. Witzel slowly, "'Gribble, is this the town where a detective by the name of Grubb lives?'"

"Gubb is the name," said Mr. Gubb.

"Gubb. That's what I said, 'Gubb,'" said Mr. Witzel. "'Is it?' I asked Gribble. 'Yes,' he says, 'it is. Gubb, the graduate of the—of the—'"

"Rising Sun Detective Agency Correspondence School of Deteckating," supplied Mr. Gubb.

"Ex-act-ly!" said Mr. Witzel. "'Is that the man?' I asked Gribble. 'It is,' he

says. That made me think a bit. 'Gribble,' I says, 'by to-morrow there will be forty Chicago detectives in this town, all looking for Master. And I don't care a whoop for any of them,' I says. 'I'm the leader of them all, as anybody who has read the exploits of—of George Augustus Wechsler—'"

"Charles Augustus Witzel," said Gribble, correctly.

"I have so many aliases I forget them," said Mr. Witzel to Mr. Gubb. "You'll understand that perfectly. You are a detective, and I'm a detective, Witzel or Wotzel or Wutzel—who cares? We understand each other. Don't we?"

"I presume to suppose we will do so in the course of time," said Philo Gubb politely.

"Pre-cise-ly!" said Mr. Witzel. "So I said to Gribble, 'I don't mind these cheap-John Chicago detectives. Amateurs, most of them. Never took a correspondence school course in their lives. But Gubb! I'm afraid of Gubb!' 'Why?' asks Gribble. 'He's a wise one,' I said. 'We all know all about him, in Chicago. And he's a native here. He knows the ground. He's the man who will find Master, if I don't. But I've got an advantage. I've got the clue.'"

He pointed to the suit-case.

"So Gribble says to me," said Mr. Witzel, "'Why don't you and Gubb combine? Why don't you work on the case together, and split the reward?' 'Great idea!' I says, and—here I am. How about it, Mr. Gobb?"

"Gubb is the name I adhere to when not deteckating," said Mr. Gubb kindly. "And as to how about it, I can refer to Lesson I, in which it is said, 'The possession of a clue is the first step, and the most important, in elucidation of cases.' I consider the valuableness of that suit-case clue to be worth twenty-five hundred dollars, and as such I should consider it if I had it. A combination similar to that which you mentioned would be a pride to me, but I should mention that I am not into the deteckative business entirely for cash and money. The exercise of the deteckative talents is of considerable valuation to me as such. I wouldn't want to enter into a combination shutting

me out from using the ability taught to me in Chapters I to XII inclusive, of the Correspondence course. For the twenty-five hundred which would fall to my share, I should expect to detect to some considerable extent."

"Quite right! *Quite* right!" said Mr. Witzel promptly. "That meets my plans entirely. I make my headquarters here. I give you a free hand. I am a—a—synthetic detective."

"Yes, sir. A *Sherlock Holmes* kind of detective," said Philo Gubb.

"Ex-act-ly!" said Mr. Witzel. "I think things out. I take a collar, or a sock, out of that suit-case, and think about it. Speck of brick-dust on the collar—I consider it. I think where it came from. I look at it through microscopes and things. But you go out. You shadow and snoop and trail. I remain here, and you go forth. For you see," he added, "I'm so well known that if Master saw me he would disappear instantly. Instantly!"

"I'm willing to transact it as a business bargain onto them terms," said Philo Gubb, and it was agreed. Mr. Gribble immediately cut the cords that bound the two bundles, and released a canvas cot and a bundle of bedding. He placed the cot upright and laid the bedding upon it. Then he said good night and withdrew, closing the door behind him. Mr. Gubb waited until he heard Mr. Gribble's footsteps on the brass-clad stairs.

"That Gribble man aint what I'd term by name of a—of a—" He hesitated. "He's not known as a strictly reliable citizen in any respect," he ended. "I wouldn't trust him any more than need be necessary."

"Thank you," said Mr. Witzel, who was already removing his garments. "I don't mean to. And now, if you don't mind, as I'm tired and have to do some very strong synthetic detecting to-morrow, I'll retire. Let's see if Mr. Master has a night-shirt in his suit-case. I think it helps the synthetic mind to sleep in the night-shirt of the man it is hunting."

He opened the suit-case, using—oddly enough—a key from his own bunch of keys. He found a night-shirt and put it on. To his surprise it fitted him exactly,

which was odd, for Mr. Witzel was an unusually tall and thin man. Without wasting time, he climbed into the cot and closed his eyes. Mr. Gubb also retired.

"Not a word about my being here, Detective," said Mr. Witzel, and the next moment he was snoring. Philo Gubb, from his cot, watched Mr. Witzel until he was sure he was thoroughly asleep. Then the correspondence school detective slipped out of bed and knelt over the suit-case.

The suit-case contained the usual variety of possessions of a man on a trip away from home. Not only so, but Mr. Master's linen was all plainly marked. The name "C. Master" was written in indelible ink on each piece. An extra suit of outer garments was marked with the name of the tailor, and with Mr. Master's name and the date of delivery. There were silver-backed toilet articles, engraved with Mr. Master's name, and these Mr. Gubb examined closely, but what caught and held his interest most was a folded document, covered in light blue paper and endorsed "Last Will and Testament of Orlando J. Higgins. Copy."

The will began with the usual preamble. This was followed by a series of bequests to servants and employees of the late maternal uncle of Mr. Custer Master, but the clause that caught Philo Gubbs' bird-like eye, and held it, was the next.

"To my nephew, Custer Master," this clause said, "I give and bequeath \$450,000, together with any part and remainder of my estate not otherwise disposed of in this will; but, be it understood, my said nephew, Custer Master, shall benefit by this clause only in case he faithfully carries out the instructions contained in the sealed envelope attached hereto and sealed with my seal, the contents of said envelope to be read by my hereinafter named Executors, and the said Custer Master, and not necessarily by any other persons whatsoever; the said Executors are to be the sole judges of whether the said Custer Master has carried out the instructions therein contained."

This document was worn at the corners of the folds, and slightly soiled, as

if Mr. Master had carried it in his pocket some time before dropping it in his suit-case. Mr. Gubb looked from it to the sleeping man on the cot, and as he did so his eye caught a name written on the shirt-band of the sleeper's shirt, which was thrown carelessly over a bundle of wall paper. With the caution advised in Lesson III, Mr. Gubb approached the shirt and seized it by the neck. The name on the neckband was "C. Master."

With the same caution, and following closely Lesson III and its directions for "Searching Occupied Apartments, Etc.," Mr. Gubb examined the remaining articles of dress the Chicago detective had cast aside. All were marked "C. Master" or "C. M." or with a monogram composed of the letters "C. M." interwoven. The tweed suit itself, worn by the Chicago detective, was marked, inside the pockets, as the property of "C. Master."

As cautiously as he could, although the wall paper trimmings made his progress sound like the rustling of October leaves in a brisk breeze, Philo Gubb crossed to his trunk and took from the left-hand compartment of the tray his trusty pistol. It was a large and deadly looking pistol, about a foot and a half long, with a small ramrod beneath the barrel. It was a muzzle-loader of the crop of 1854, and carried a bullet the size of a well-matured cherry. It was as heavy as a vitrified paving brick. Its efficiency as a firearm was unknown, as Mr. Gubb had never discharged it, but it looked seven times as dangerous as the small modern revolvers, and no doubt it was. A man, facing Philo Gubb's trusty weapon, had no feeling that a small, neat hole was going to be bored through him. He felt that if the gun went off he would be utterly and disastrously blown to flinders. Mr. Gubb, looking first to see that the brass percussion cap was in place on the pistol, pointed it at the sleeping Mr. Witzel, using both hands, and sighting along the barrel.

"Wake up!" he exclaimed sternly.

Mr. Witzel sat straight up on the cot. For an instant he was still dazed with sleep and did not seem to know where he was; then a look of joy spread over his

face and he jumped from the cot and, with both hands extended, moved toward Detective Gubb.

"Superb!" he exclaimed. "A perfect specimen! Wonderfully preserved!"

"Go back!" said Philo Gubb sternly. "This article is a loaded pistol gun, prepared for momentary explosion at any time at all. Go back!"

"Remarkable!" cried Mr. Witzel joyously. "A superb specimen. Let me see it. Let me look at it."

He walked up to the gun and peered into its muzzle with one eye. He bent his head to read the engraving on the top of the barrel.

"A real Briggs & Bolton 53½ caliber, muzzle-loading, 1854!" he exclaimed rapturously. Mr. Gubb pushed him away with one hand.

"Go back there into range," he said sternly. "In shooting I aim to kill, but not to blow into particles of pieces. I am aiming this firearm at you with deadly intention to shoot at the slightest move, but I do not wish to desire to maim you to bits. Go back!"

"But, my dear sir!" exclaimed Mr. Witzel. "Do you know what you have there?"

He put his hand on Mr. Gubb's arm, and spoke with deep earnestness.

"It's a pistol gun," said Philo Gubb. "If you don't stand back, I'll shoot you anyway."

"It's a Briggs & Bolton," said Mr. Witzel. "That's what it is. It is the only well-preserved specimen of Briggs & Bolton I ever saw."

Mr. Gubb shook off the hand that clasped his arm.

"I don't care what it is," said Mr. Gubb. "It's a pistol gun, and it's bung full of powder and bullet, and when I point it at you I mean that if you make a move I'm a-going to shoot."

"And I don't care what you mean," said Mr. Witzel. "It's a Briggs & Bolton, and I warn you that you have that gun so full of powder that if you pull that trigger you'll blow it to bits and ruin the only perfect specimen of that gun I ever saw! I tell you I am an expert on old weapons, and that gun is a priceless treasure—"

"And I tell you," said Philo Gubb

sternly, "that I aint going to shoot you whilst you're rubbing your nose right into this gun. I'm a fully graduated de-tekative, with a diploma, and when I've got to kill I'll kill, but I aint going to mutilate the corpse at the same time. Go back there where I can shoot at you."

"Go back!" cried Philo Gubb menacingly. "One!"

"I'll give you fifty dollars for that gun; just as she is," said Mr. Witzel.

"Two!" said Mr. Gubb.

"Sixty dollars!" said Mr. Witzel.

"Th—" said the paper-hanger-detective, stepping backward to get room to sight along the long barrel. Unfortunately the trunk was just behind him



"Hands up!" he said. Instantly Mr. Witzel raised his hands in the air.

"I wont!" said Mr. Witzel angrily. "If you shoot off that gun you'll ruin it. I wont have it ruined. I haven't such a good specimen in my whole collection. I wont go back. I wont let you shoot!"

Philo Gubb was slow to anger, but he was sorely pressed now, and his temper failed him.

"Look here," he said to Mr. Witzel. "If you don't go back there where I can get a shot at you if I want to, I'll—I'll smack you on the face."

"If you shoot off that gun, and bust it," said Mr. Witzel, with equal anger. "I'll—I'll hit you on the head."

and as he stepped back he tripped over it and fell backward, doubling up like a jack-knife. But he kept his presence of mind. The long barrel of the Briggs & Bolton protruded from between the soles of Philo Gubb's feet in Mr. Witzel's direction, and Philo Gubb's eye glanced along the barrel.

"Hands up!" he said. Instantly Mr. Witzel raised his hands in the air.

"I'll give you seventy dollars," he said. "Make it seventy-five," said Mr. Gubb, "and as soon as I'm done with it in the course of this case of detecting I am now employed into with it, you can have it."

"It's a bargain!" said Mr. Witzel happily. "It's my pistol. Now, what's all this nonsense about shooting me?"

"Nonsense is an insufficient word to use in relation to this here case," said Philo Gubb grimly. "It wout be nonsense for you when you get through with it. What did you do with the corpse?"

"With the—what the *what!*" cried Mr. Witzel.

"The remains," said Mr. Gubb. "What did you do with them?"

"The remains of what?" asked Mr. Witzel.

"Of Mister Custer Master," said Philo Gubb, easing himself a little by shifting one waving foot. "There is no need to pretend to play innocent. I know Mr. William Gribble that brought you here, as well as anybody knows him, and I know he aint no good. It aint no recommendation to be brought by him. It's an un-recommendation. Where is the body?"

"My dear Mr. Detective Gubb!" exclaimed Mr. Witzel. "I know nothing about any body or any remains or any corpse. I am George Augustus Wetzler—"

"Maybe you are," said Philo Gubb. "Maybe so. But your clothes aint. Your clothes are the clothes of Mister Custer Master. The question is, 'Did you murder him alone, or did you and William Gribble murder him together?' Did you and William Gribble boil him up in a washing-machine or what? That's the question. Answer!"

Mr. Witzel-Wetzler-Wetzler's mouth fell open.

"Murdered him!" he exclaimed aghast. "But—but—"

"In the name of the law," said Philo Gubb. "I take you into custody for the murder and disappearing bodilyness of Mister Custer Master. Turn your back and keep your hands up until I get from behind this trunk, and I'll put handcuffs on you in proper shape and manner. Turn!"

Mr. Witzel turned—all but his head.

He kept his face toward the priceless (or, more properly) seventy-five-dollar Briggs & Bolton.

"Mr. Gubb," he said, "you are making a serious mistake. I am a detective."

"You aint?" said Philo Gubb. "I searched all your things and you aint got a silver badge nor a false mustache nowhere. I'm going to turn you right over to the police to-morrow morning."

"To the police!" exclaimed Mr. Witzel. "Don't do that! Whatever you do, don't do that!" And suddenly, like a nervous dyspeptic suddenly overwrought, Mr. Witzel broke down and, falling on the cot, began to sob. Philo Gubb looked at him a moment with amazement. Then he dug a pair of handcuffs out of his trunk and, walking to where Mr. Witzel lay, prodded him in the back with the muzzle of the pistol. Mr. Witzel turned quickly, rolling over like an eel.

"Stop it! You're tickling me. I can't stand tickling!" he cried. "I—I can't stand lots of things. I'm—I'm the most sensitive man in the world. I—I can't stand cold water at all."

"Well, nobody is cold-watering you," said Philo Gubb. "Handcuffs aint cold water."

"But cold water is," said Mr. Witzel. "Cold water kills me! It makes me shiver, and turn blue, and goose-fleshy, and gives me cramps in the palms of my hands and the soles of my feet. I—listen: my doctor says cold baths will kill me. The shock of 'em. Bad heart, you understand."

Philo Gubb's eyes blinked like those of a flamingo trying to think deep into the intricacies of an abstruse problem.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Witzel, grasping Mr. Gubb's hand. "I can't stand cold baths. They'd kill me, you understand. It would be suicide! So—so I knew Billy Gribble was a liar. I knew he was a perjurer. Didn't I set him up in business here, to get rid of him? Don't he owe me a good turn?"

"Does he?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Hasn't he two bathrooms in connection with his laundry, 'Hot and Cold Baths, All hours, Ladies Tuesdays and Wednesdays Only?'" asked Mr. Witzel. "Mr. Gubb, I will be frank. I am Custer Master!"

"The reward for who—for who the reward," said Philo Gubb, seeking a grammatical form that would sound right, "for information as to which five thousand dollars reward is offered!"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Master. "And I will make it six thousand if you do not give information. It was my idea to palm myself off on you as a detective. That did not work. I admit I am Master. I am Custer Master. Here, read this!"

He reached for his vest and from the pocket took a slip of paper. It was typewritten and headed "Secret Stipulation Regarding Custer Master Clause of Orlando J. Higgins Will. Copy."

Being a firm believer in the efficacy of cold baths for the cure of dyspepsia and nervous diseases arising therefrom, and having been laughed at for same by my nephew, Custer Master, and feeling that a course of ice-cold baths would cure him, I make it a part of my will and testament that the sum or sums bequeathed to him shall be given to him only after he has faithfully, and upon the sworn testimony of an eye-witness, bathed for twelve minutes, every morning for one month of thirty days, in ice-cold water.

"Cleanliness may be next to godliness," said Mr. Master, "but ice-water baths are surely my shortest road to a future state, and I'm not ready for that yet. Still, I did not like to give up \$450,000. To Billy Gribble," he added, with a meaning smile, "all baths are cold

baths. I hold a mortgage on his laundry machinery."

"And so you came up here to my office to hide whilst bathing in so-called ice-water at Mister Gribble's?" said Philo Gubb.

"Exactly!" said Mr. Master.

"If you aint got six thousand and seventy-five dollars by you," said Philo Gubb simply, "you can give me a check for the whole amount in the morning, but if you go to take the bullet out of this pistol you'll have to get an auger. I made the bullet myself and it was too big, and I had to pound it into the gun with a hammer and screw-driver. It's in good and safe."

"And you would have dared to pull the trigger?" asked Mr. Master.

"I would have dared so to do," said Mr. Gubb.

"It would have blown the pistol to atoms!" exclaimed Mr. Master.

"It would so have done," said Mr. Gubb, "except for the time I loaded it being the first beginning time I ever loaded a pistol. In loading a Briggs & Bolton, I have since subsequently learned, the powder ought to go into it first, and the bullet second. I put the bullet in first."

"Well, bless my stars!" exclaimed Mr. Master. "Bless my stars! If that is the case—if that is the case, I'm going to bed again. I have to get up before daylight to take a bath."



Made in Germany

By Crittenden Marriott

Author of "Sally Castleton, Southerner," etc.

THE strange story of the fortune and ill fortune that came to Miss Chester after the little Chinese gave her the god of wishes.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

"Praise God from whom all blessings
flow
Praise him all creatures here below."

THE childish voices rose in the words of the long-meter doxology. The girls mostly sang on to the end, but the boys began to slip away as soon as the hymn began, and with the last word they rushed for the door.

Ah Fong did not join in the rush. He was the son of the naval attaché of the Chinese embassy and was the only Chinese in the Sunday school. He usually lingered behind the young Caucasians who made up the rest of his class; Miss Chester, his teacher, suspected that he stayed in order to avoid them. On this Sunday morning, however, he had another object, for as Miss Chester stood aside to let him pass, he took a small package from his pocket and held it out to her. "You go mally soon?" he queried. "Me bling plesent."

Miss Chester took the package hesitantly. She was a tall girl, perhaps twenty-five years of age, with a clear-cut, cameo-like profile and a mass of ashen-colored hair. No one would have called her pretty, though many thought her handsome and a few thought her beautiful in spite of her lack of animation. On the Sunday before, she had told the youths who composed her class that she was to be married soon, and had received the awkward acknowledgments

with which the half-grown boy hides his emotions. Ah Fong was the first to offer her a present.

"It's very sweet of you to think of me, Ah Fong," she said. "Thank you very much. May I look at it?" She opened the package as she spoke, wondering what trivial offering she would find within. Then she caught her breath suddenly.

The package contained an intricately carved bracelet of heavy jade. An attenuated figure, either a monkey or an imp, coiled around it, grasping a forked tail in both hands. The grin on the Simian face was really devilish. Two tiny red stones sparkled in the eyes! Miss Chester gasped again as she met them.

"But—but—this is too valuable for you to give me, Ah Fong," she exclaimed. "It must have cost a very great deal. Does your father know?"

Ah Fong shook his head. "Blacelet b'long me," he said. "I give."

"But—" began Miss Chester.

"Him blong me. I give. Him wishing blacelet. You tell devil what you want, and you say 'Little gleen devil, give me my wish,' and he give it you. Little gleen devil give you three wishes. Then you give blacelet away. Devil no give you any more."

Still Miss Chester hesitated, casting about for some way to decline the costly present without hurting the boy's feel-

ings. "But don't you want some wishes yourself, Ah Fong?" she asked.

"Me had wishes. Blacelet no give more to me. You get wishes now." The boy wriggled away and dashed down the aisle to the door.

Miss Chester followed him slowly. She was no judge of Oriental carvings, but to her the bracelet seemed extremely valuable, and, in spite of the boy's claim of personal ownership, she doubted whether she ought to keep it. Finally she slipped it into her muff, resolving to call up the boy's father on the telephone as soon as possible and make sure that the gift had been made with his consent.

OUTSIDE, she was joined by her fiancé, Charley Finley, and the two walked home together, receiving congratulations from friends as they passed. In the excitement of the moment, and later in the interest of discussing the future, Miss Chester forgot all about the bracelet.

"Yes," young Finley remarked, as they parted. "We're going to be fixed bully. The old man's going to raise my pay, and sooner or later he's going to take me into partnership. I could buy in now if I only had a few spare thousands. But it's all right. I'll get in after a while."

The words were still echoing in Miss Chester's mind as she ascended to her room. As she laid her muff on the bed, the bracelet slipped from it and she picked it up and carried it to the light to examine it more closely.

It seemed to her really wonderfully carved. The ears of the impish figure were cut so thin that they transmitted a green light. The eyes were very bright; actually they seemed to sparkle malevolently. Miss Chester shivered a little as she looked at them. "Dear me," she thought, "the thing looks almost alive. I suppose it came from some ancient temple, but I'm dreadfully afraid that Ah Fong stole it from his father. I must ask." Regretfully she laid the bracelet down; then she picked it up again. "Three wishes," she laughed. "Wouldn't it be nice if it really could give them to me. I'd wish—yes, I'd wish for those

few thousands that Charley needs to enable him to buy into the firm." Smilingly she held up the bracelet to the light. "You hear me, little green devil," she said. "I want—Charley didn't say, though, how much he needed, but so long as I am wishing I might as well wish for a lot—I want twenty thousand dollars. You hear me, little green devil?"

With a sigh she laid the bracelet down. "If wishes were horses, beggars could ride," she quoted; and went down to dinner.

As she was getting up from the table a card was brought to her. "Mr. Marlowe," she read. "I don't know any Mr. Marlowe." She glanced at the small type in the corner of the card, and saw that it was "Attorney at law." "Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "What in the world does a lawyer want with me? Say I'll come at once, Susan."

A YOUNG man rose as she entered the parlor. The rather contemptuous look on his face changed suddenly as he saw her. He seemed to have expected her to be a totally different sort of person. "Miss Chester?" he questioned, almost doubtfully.

The girl bowed. "Yes, Mr. Marlowe," she said. "You wanted to see me? Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you." Mr. Marlowe took a seat. He seemed uncertain how to proceed. "I—I beg your pardon," he said. "I called on business. I have had some difficulty in finding you. You are Miss Eleanor Chester, and you formerly lived in Chicago, I believe?"

The girl nodded. "Yes," she said. "But I don't understand—"

"You knew a Mr. Glynn there?"

The girl's face paled a little. "Yes," she said, wonderingly. "I was a stenographer in his office five years ago."

"Ah! yes. So I understood. Miss Chester, Mr. Glynn is dead."

"Dead! Oh! I am so sorry."

"Yes, he is dead. And he has left you a large sum of money—twenty-five thousand dollars, in fact."

The girl rose to her feet suddenly. "Twenty-five thousand dollars!" she gasped. "He's left twenty-five thousand dollars to me. Oh! There must be some

mistake. I scarcely knew him. He had no cause to leave me twenty-five thousand dollars."

The lawyer's face twitched disagreeably. "Well, he has left it to you," he said. "I received instructions from his attorneys to hunt you out and notify you. Certain formalities will have to be observed, of course, but there is no doubt about the facts, and no desire on the part of his heirs to dispute the will. If you will come to my office tomorrow and sign the necessary documents, I will be able to place the money in your hands very shortly."

Mr. Marlowe went away at last, and Eleanor climbed the stairs to her room. She moved mechanically, dazed by this incredible wind-fall. Mr. Glynn, of all the people in the world, to leave her twenty-five thousand dollars! She could not understand it. Mr. Glynn was enormously wealthy, of course, and twenty-five thousand dollars was nothing to him; and yet why, why should he leave anything to her? She had not seen him for five years, not since the few months when she had acted as his stenographer. The thing was absolutely incredible.

Yet the lawyer said it was true. Twenty-five thousand dollars! Good heavens! How splendid it was that it should come to her at this time of all others—just when Charley needed it so much. How wonderful—



The man drew his brows down a little. "There must have been some reason," he said. "Even rich men don't leave twenty-five thousand dollars to women without a reason. How long were you with him?"

Abruptly she remembered the jade bracelet. Startled, she turned and looked toward her bureau. The tiny little red eyes seemed to leer at her and glitter like points of fire.

Weakly she staggered back and dropped into a chair. "Oh! It can't be," she cried. "It's nonsense. It's just a coincidence, of course. Such things don't happen. Oh! It's all too ridiculous."

EVEN as she spoke, however, the vestiges of superstition that inhere in all women and most men, the heritage of

the race from the far ancestral days when the world was dim and mysterious, rose slowly in her brain. "But how else?" she murmured. "How else? I asked for twenty thousand and I got twenty-five thousand. I wonder if— It couldn't have come any other way. It couldn't. And yet—oh! it's not possible!"

A knock at the door roused her. It was a maid bringing Charley Finley's card.

Agog with excitement, the girl ran down the steps and burst into the parlor and began to babble out her story. She said nothing about the bracelet or about the wish she had made on it—that was too ridiculous. She only told of the lawyer's visit and of the wealth that had suddenly descended upon her. So excited was she that she did not notice that Finley did not join in her enthusiasm but sat listening in absolute silence. When at last she finished with an "Oh! isn't it delightful?" he nodded coldly.

"Yes, I suppose so," he said slowly. "I've heard of Mr. Glynn." His tones expressed anything but commendation. "Why should he leave you money?"

The girl hesitated for a moment whether to tell of the bracelet. Finally she decided not to do so. Some day she might speak of it as a jest, but it was too silly to be mentioned seriously in a parlor with a twentieth-century clock ticking on the mantelpiece. She really could not suggest that a wish made on a carved Chinese devil had brought her a bequest from a Chicago millionaire. "I don't know why," she said. "I can't imagine."

The man drew his brows down a little. "There must have been some reason," he said. "Even rich men don't leave twenty-five thousand dollars to women without a reason. How long were you with him?"

"Only about three months. I thought he had forgotten me long ago." Miss Chester's tones were growing a little anxious. Charley was not accepting her good fortune as pleasantly as she had expected. His demeanor threw a chill on her happiness.

"You never spoke of him to me."

"I never thought of him. I went to him only temporarily, while his regular stenographer was ill. I had forgotten him and thought he had forgotten me.

I can't understand how he remembered."

FINLEY got up and began to walk to and fro. "But it's nonsense, Eleanor," he said. "It's nonsense, you know. Nobody would leave twenty-five thousand dollars to a girl who had worked for him only three months, five years before. He must have had some special reason. Did—did he ever make love to you?"

The girl drew back as if she had received a blow. "Charley!" she gasped.

"Well! I—confound it. There must have been some reason! You must know what it is. If he ever—"

"Nothing of the sort," the girl broke in, tensely. "Mr. Glynn never said a word of love to me. I don't believe he ever really noticed me. I was merely a piece of office machinery to him."

The man stopped his restless pacing to and fro. "You couldn't have been a mere piece of machinery to him," he grated. "His leaving you this money shows that you were more—much more. For God's sake, Eleanor, tell me the truth. Tell me why this man should have left you this money."

The girl sprang up, trembling in every limb. "What do you mean?" she gasped. "Oh! How dare you? How dare you? I was glad because the money would help you so. And now you—you insult me. Oh! I wish I had never heard of it."

"Insult you! No! No! I didn't mean that. But, Eleanor, there must be *some* explanation."

With trembling fingers the girl dragged off the ring upon her left hand and held it out. "Take it," she begged. "Take it and go away. I never want to see your face again. Go away."

The man made no move to take the ring. "I didn't mean anything, Eleanor," he began, "and you know it. But it's queer, and—"

He spoke to vacancy, for the girl had dropped the ring on the table and had raced out the door and up the stairs.

For a moment he gazed after her blankly; then he strode out of the house.

AS the girl entered the door of her own room her eyes again met those of the devil. They seemed to leer at her

with venomous triumph. Furiously she rushed across the room and snatched up the bracelet and raised her hand to throw it in the fire. Then she stopped. "Oh! You wicked, wicked thing," she wailed. "You wicked, mocking devil! You've got me into this trouble. Now get me out. Unwish my wish for me. Take the money away. I don't want it. Little green devil, give me my wish."

A tap came at the door, and Miss Chester opened it. The maid stood there with another card. It was that of Mr. Marlowe.

Hesitant, wondering, not daring to believe what the coincidence seemed to promise, the girl slipped the bracelet upon her wrist and went down the stairs.

Mr. Marlowe, who was striding up and down as she entered the parlor, came toward her. "Oh! Miss Chester," he burst out, "I'm afraid you'll never forgive me, but it's all a mistake. I just got a telegram from Chicago. The money wasn't left to you at all. It was left to a Miss Chester-ton. The attorneys out there thought she had come here. They found her in Chicago only this morning."

The girl tottered to a chair and sat down. "Thank God," she said.

"Eh! What?" Mr. Marlowe did not understand. He had known many people to thank God when they had received bequests, but he had never before known anyone to do so on losing one. He thought he misunderstood.

Miss Chester did not explain. She had regained command of herself. "It doesn't matter at all. Mr. Marlowe," she said. "On the whole, I am glad that the money does not come to me. Don't trouble about it a bit."

MR. MARLOWE went at last with reiterated apologies. When he had gone, Eleanor's eyes dropped mechanically to the bracelet on her wrist. "I've beaten you, little fiend," she muttered. "beaten you with your own weapons." She twisted the bracelet till the eyes came uppermost.

They still sparkled with evil triumph. The girl looked at them questioningly.



Furiously she rushed across the room and snatched up the bracelet and raised her hand to throw it in the fire. Then she stopped. "Oh! You wicked, wicked thing," she wailed. "You wicked mocking devil! You've got me into this trouble. Now get me out. Unwish my wish for me. Take the money away. I don't want it. Little green devil, give me my wish."

Then she uttered a short cry. For the first time she realized that losing the money would not bring back her lover.

She was not even quite sure that she wanted him back. His distrust, momentary as it was, had cut her to the heart. Of course he had some excuse. Now that it was all over, she could realize, as she had not done before, how incredible her explanation—or lack of explanation—of the bequest must have seemed to him. It was incredible even to herself. It could never have happened in ordinary life. It was all the fault of that fiendish bracelet. Charley should not have distrusted her even for an instant, and yet, and yet—

Suddenly a thought came to her. Ah Fong had said that the devil would give

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her three wishes. She had had only two. There was one left. Again she held the bracelet up to the light. "I want Charley to forget everything," she said, "and to believe in me always. Give me my wish, little green devil."

AS she spoke the door-bell rang. Without an instant's hesitation she went to it and opened it. The devil had granted her two former wishes almost instantly. She did not doubt that he would grant this one as quickly.

Her intuition told her true. Finley was at the door. Silently he followed her into the parlor. Then he turned. "I've come back, Eleanor," he said. "I wish that Chicago millionaire hadn't left you the money, but since he has done so, it's all right. Forgive me, dear. I didn't really distrust you. You know that. You will forgive me, won't you?" He held out his arms, and the girl walked into them.

"It's all a mistake, Charlie," she murmured, a moment later. "The lawyer has just been back to tell me. The money wasn't left to me at all, but to a Miss Chesterton, whom they found to-day in Chicago. It was all a mistake."

The man drew a long breath. "Well,

I'm glad of it," he said. "I understand it, of course, but people would be sure to talk. I'm glad it was a mistake. Now let me put your ring on again."

Shyly the girl held up her hand, and he slipped the circlet into its place. As he did so his eyes fell on the bracelet. "Hello!" he exclaimed. "You've got one of those bracelets, too, have you?"

"One of them?" Eleanor's eyes widened. "No! This isn't a 'one-of-them' bracelet. It's the only one of its kind." She laughed, but there was a note of superstitious terror in her merriment. "This is an ancient Chinese carving, taken from some old temple—"

The man laughed. "Really?" he said. "It's very like— May I look at it?" He drew the bracelet over the girl's fingers and looked inside it. "I knew it!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "See! Here's the manufacturer's stamp, 'Made in Germany, 1913.' The five- and ten-cent store had a window full of them yesterday."

"But—but it's a wishing bracelet!"

"Of course! That's what the directions call it. What do they say? Oh! Yes! 'Little green devil, give me my wish!' The town's full of people wishing on them to-day."



RING IN THE OLD

By John Barton Oxford

FROM the little mullioned windows in the tower of St. Bartholomew's a faint light came creeping into the October darkness. It came very faintly indeed, both by reason of the feebleness of Martin Pierce's lantern and because those little mullioned windows were more or less over-run with ivy, the leaves already beginning to turn.

It was a Friday night, and always on Friday nights, winter or summer, hot or cold, fair weather or rainy, the light showed in those tower windows. Martin Pierce was carefully and thoroughly oiling the levers that rang the chimes, seeing to it that none of the many ropes, running upward through the rough board above his head like the first skeleton warp of some huge fabric, were all

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in good condition, and assuring himself that the repertory of chime-tunes laid out by St. Bartholomew's rector for the morning and evening ringing did not overtax the chimes' limitations of two octaves.

A very old man was Martin Pierce—bent of shoulders, wrinkled of face, well-nigh toothless, but possessed of a certain keenness of eye and a certain stubborn setting of the shrunken lips which told plainly that Martin Pierce, for all his years, had a will all his own, and, moreover, one which he was not at all afraid to display upon the slightest provocation.

For many years Martin had been St. Bartholomew's sexton, ringing the chimes,—which had been presented to the little church years ago in memory of a worthy man who spent his summers in the town and was now all but forgotten,—always finding flaws in each succeeding rector, digging the graves in the little, shady, elm-grown church-yard, shining up the memorial windows of stained glass, and forever grumbling about his lot.

Years ago, when Martin was neither so old, so crabbed nor yet so complaining, he had learned to play those chimes—learned by the very sweat of his brow. It was his proud boast that no hand but his had ever rung them. It was his firm determination that, so long as he saw fit to remain upon this earth, no other hand than his should ever ring them. From the day of their installation Martin had taken especial pride in them. They meant much to him—more, perhaps, than they would have meant to most men, for Martin had neither wife nor child nor any near of kin. The one bright spot in Martin's rather bleak life had been that he had learned to play those chimes, learned to do it passably well, with an expression all his own. He felt a certain sense of proprietorship in them; on them he lavished all the affection a bleak nature like his own was capable of bestowing.

There was not a sign of verdegriis on one of those many bells on the bell-deck, never a frayed strand in any of the ropes that was not quickly seen to, never so much as a squeak in the levers that played those chimes.

Of course they were real bells—none of the present-day makeshift tubular affairs. Such sorry imitations of the real thing Martin held in supreme disdain. Also he had no use for new-fangled inventions for making the playing of the chimes less primitive than the simple lever-and-rope method which had been installed originally with the chimes. Many a hopeful promoter of such contrivances could testify to Martin's scorn when he had been approached with a suggestion along such lines.

THE evening being warm for late September, Martin had left the tower door open. Outside, the wind was having a fine time of it with the ivy—rustling the leaves sharply and whistling blithely through the tangle of climbing branches. Martin, his spectacles pulled low on his nose, his head thrust absurdly forward, the lantern in one hand and a long-snouted brass oil-can in the other, was so absorbed with the worn and hand-blackened old levers that he did not hear the tap of light footsteps on the flag walk that led from the church-yard gate to the door of the tower. It was only when his lantern flashed dully on something softly white that he was aware a girl was standing just inside the tower door, and that in all probability she had been standing there for some moments.

He straightened up, peering keenly and none too cordially over the steel rims of his spectacles.

He had expected it would be some of the "summer folks," as Martin termed the members of the little colony who played at farming on the sloping hills about the town. Therefore he was not disappointed to see Virginia Storer standing there.

"Good evenin'," said Martin, and the simple salutation became almost a rebuke, the way he said it.

"Good evening, Mr. Pierce," replied the girl. She was smiling at Martin, but the smile had a certain hesitating, fawning quality about it that was not lost on Martin's keen old eyes. He put down the lantern and made a great pretense of cleaning out the snout of the oiler with a piece of straw he picked up from the floor.



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Virginia Storer was a very pretty girl. Her eyes were large and appealing, her cheeks smooth and beautifully colored, her little hands very soft and very tapering of fingers. The Storers were reputed to be the wealthiest of the play-farmers: it was also well known through the village that their wealth was of a decidedly recent acquiring. They had bought a hill—a whole hill of many acres on the outskirts of the town,—and the cattle and the sheep and the horses with which it had been stocked were a seven-days wonder in the village, as were the buildings that had been forthwith erected and the motors that had gone to overpopulate the new garage.

"I wonder, Mr. Pierce," said Virginia in that soft voice of hers, while her big eyes looked at him wistfully, "if you would be willing to do me a favor?"

Martin grunted. He yanked the straw out of the snout of the oiler and sent a trial stream of oil hurtling against the stone wall of the tower.

"How can I tell whether I will or I won't till I know what the favor is?" he inquired testily.

"You play the chimes at seven Sunday nights, don't you?" said the girl. "You always play three tunes, I believe. It takes about twenty minutes, in all. I wonder if I could induce you to play a tune I want played very much for the third tune next Sunday evening."

Martin grunted again. He worked the flexible bottom of the oiler in lively fashion. The oil shot forth in quick little spurts.

"I don't have nothin' to do with that at all," snapped he. "Mr. Barrows, the rector, gives me a list of what tunes he wants played each Sunday, mornin' and evenin'. I jest plays 'em. I don't have nothin' to do with the selectin' of 'em."

He moved towards the levers again as if, so far as he was concerned, the interview was at an end. He stooped for the lantern he had set on the stone floor.

It was not an auspicious opening, nor was the girl given any encouragement to pursue her request farther. But that, like Martin, Virginia had a mind of her own was apparent from the way her pretty lips suddenly tightened over her even little teeth.

"It would be a very great favor to me," said she quickly, "and one I'd be willing to pay for—well."

Martin hesitated. Anyone in the village could have told you that he always deliberated when the almighty dollar came into the equation. He rubbed his chin.

"I aint never run in no tune that wa'n't give me to play," he mused.

He looked at Virginia. He knew those simple dresses cost a lot of money, and that shoes such as she was wearing were marked at fabulous prices in the particular store in the village which catered to the summer people's tastes. Moreover, there was a little watch on the girl's wrist with the dial outlined in diamonds, which flashed and gleamed even in that dull light. The price she offered surely would not be niggardly. Martin cogitated yet more deeply.

"Sunday night, now," Martin went on, peering through his spectacles at a slip of paper pinned to one of the bell-ropes, "it's goin' to be 'Holy, Holy, Holy' and 'Jerusalem, The Golden' and 'The Church's One Foundation.' I might say I got mixed up on the last one and play the tune you wanted. How much would it be worth to you if I did?"

Virginia's eyes brightened. She took a step towards him.

"Fifty dollars," she said promptly.

IT was Martin's old eyes that brightened now. Then a disturbing thought crossed his mind, or at least, the sudden wrinkling of his brows seemed to suggest that such was the case.

"Of course it's a psalm-tune you want played?" he queried.

The girl shook her head.

"Not exactly a psalm-tune, no, Mr. Pierce," said she. "In fact, it's 'Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes' that I want to hear for the third tune on the chimes Sunday night."

Martin fairly gasped. He glared at her so savagely over his spectacles that almost involuntarily she shrank from him.

"A drinkin'-song on the church chimes!" he sputtered as if she had just been guilty of some heinous sacrilege.

"Oh, it's not a drinking-song, Mr.



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Pierce," she denied. "It's just a dear old English love song. It's—"

"It can't be done," said Martin with finality. "I should be takin' enough chances runnin' in a psalm tune that Mr. Barrows hadn't selected; but a tune like that—never, young lady! Mr. Barrows and me don't get along too well anyway. He's fair achin' for some chance to oust me and get the vestrymen to put in a new sexton here. He says I'm too old. Me play anything like that on the chimes?" he ended with an unpleasant chuckle.

"I'd be willing to make the price a hundred dollars," offered the girl.

"A thousand wouldn't tempt me," said Martin angrily. "I've played these chimes since they was first hung in this belfry. I aint takin' no chances that I don't keep on a-playin' 'em so long as I live. I aint goin' to give none of 'em any chances to chuck me outer the job. Good-night, Miss."

Martin waddled over to the levers again, but Virginia Storer did not go as he had expected she would. Instead, there was a little sniffing intake of her breath. Glancing up he saw something glistening on the round, smooth cheek nearest him.

Martin said wrathfully under his breath as if to himself: "Nor all the women's tears in creation wont tempt me, neither."

But he straightened himself jerkily once more and turned to her.

"Of course the thing aint no ways possible," said he gruffly. "At the same time, though it's probably none of my business, I should like to know why you're so anxious to have that tune played on the chimes."

She did not answer at once. She stood there toying with the slender gold band that held the watch on her wrist. She was looking at Martin measuringly. Something about him at the moment seemed to invite full confidence—or else she staked all on the final card of making him her confidant. Anyway, she began speaking in a lowered voice.

"Of course you've heard all the gossip, Mr. Pierce. Well, it's true. The reason Father isn't here this summer is because there is going to be a separation. He's

coming down Sunday night to make the final settlement—the final property settlement—with Mother. They'll finish, I judge, about the time you are playing the chimes.

"It's—it's all so needless—just a misunderstanding growing out of more money than they've either of them been used to. It's killing them—both of them, but neither would admit it for the world.

"That song—the one I wanted you to play on the chimes—was their favorite. Almost my first recollection is of Mother playing it on the piano and singing it in the dusk, and Father leaning over her and holding her hand. They hadn't so much money, then, nor so many interests to distract them from each other. They *needed* each other in those days; they need each other quite as much now, only they don't know it.

"So I thought if Sunday night when they were making this wretched settlement of the property the old, old song came to them, it might—it was just possible—"

Her eyes overflowed. The words died in a little choking sound. Martin sniffed so vehemently that the spectacles hopped about on his nose.

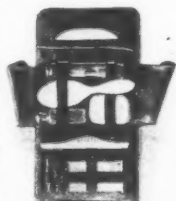
"They're both so good—but so proud and so foolish—and it has all come about from such a really trivial thing," said she.

Martin set the spectacles firmly on his nose, somewhat higher on the bridge of it.

"Look here, Miss Virginia," said he. "your pa's always given me ten dollars every Christmas since you folks has been comin' here, and that time I was laid up with sciaticky your ma sent me whole lots of nice things. I gotta think this over. It'll jest about mean the end of my job here at the church if I go to makin' free with them chimes like you want me to. I can't say as I will. But I'm a-goin' to think it over. Don't you offer me no more money; that wont do no good, nor don't you say another thing to me to-night. You jest let me think it all over. Mind, I aint makin' no promises. But maybe—mind again I jest say *maybe*—"

The girl caught his wrinkled old hand in both her own. Impulsively she raised

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herself on tiptoes. Something warm and soft and altogether delectable brushed his cheek. Then footsteps pattered down the flag walk to the churchyard gate. The ivy leaves rustled chucklingly on the lichened stones of the tower.

Martin Pierce stood there rubbing his cheek and grinning his toothless grin.

"Well, I'll be durned," he ruminated. "I'll be *gol*-durned," he amended.

Then he went back to his levers.

UPSTAIRS in the big, colonial house with the stately pillars and the sunken gardens in front of it, Virginia Storer paced nervously to and fro. Now she went into the hall and leaned over the mahogany balustrade; now she returned to that perfectly appointed room and resumed her monotonous pacing. Downstairs came the murmur of voices—subdued voices, well-bred voices, entirely unexcited voices. For over an hour they had been going on in the same fashion.

The October twilight was fading in a glory of red and gold. Across the treetops in the little valley, sharply silhouetted against the flaming sky, she could see the cross on St. Bartholomew's tower and the red of the ivy leaves.

"This, then, is what we agree upon," said her father's quiet voice below-stairs. "The place here is to be yours unconditionally."

Her mother's reply was lost to her, for from St. Bartholomew's came the crash and jangle of the chimes. Martin Pierce was beginning "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Virginia, with her round arms on the window-sill, listened until the hymn was played through.

"For its support and upkeep," she heard her father's voice again, "I shall make over to you the following bonds."

He began to read, "Jerusalem, The Golden," drowned out the itemized list.

Again Virginia sat like a statue while the chimes played on.

There was a pause. Virginia could picture Martin Pierce in the tower getting ready his own peculiar chart for the next rendition—the chart marked somewhat as follows: "No. 2, slow; number 4, short; number 4, slow," and so on.

"The property at Westlake is also to be unconditionally yours," said her father's voice.

Virginia was trembling. Martin had not promised her; he had warned her against expecting too much from him. Would he play the song she had requested? A bell rang out, another, another. Virginia's face went quite white. Out of the tower was coming "The Church's One Foundation."

Martin, then, had repented his momentary softness of heart. Since Friday night he had changed again to the crabbed, short-tempered, selfish old man she had always known him to be.

The hymn went clanging on to its finish. The girl did not seem to hear it. She sat by the window, her hands clenched and that same tense, disappointed look in her eyes.

Downstairs chairs scraped on the polished floor. Footsteps went down the stone walk. Running along the hall, she saw her father, very stiff and straight, walking towards the heavy wrought-iron gates. She felt she must cry out against it all; she stooped and tugged hard at the sash of the heavy window, but it would not lift. Her father's hand was on the great iron hasp that latched the gates.

And then all at once from across the valley, loud and clear through the fading October twilight, came again the peal of the chimes. Her heart all but stopped beating; she felt her knees growing weak. Martin Pierce was fulfilling even that faint hint of a promise he had given her.

*Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will drink with mine—*

came the clang of the chimes.

Lorin Storer's hand fell from the gate-latch. He half-turned and looked towards the house he had just left so coldly and so sedately. Something there seemed to rivet his attention. He took one tentative step back towards the stately porch with its colonial pillars.

*—Or leave a kiss within the cup
And I'll not ask for wine.*

played Martin at his levers.



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Some one ran down the steps. There was a little choking, heart-broken cry. Storer began to run up the path.

"Elva!" he was crying. "Elva!"

Then she was sobbing in his arms. The chimes played on. What memories of just such soft twilights they brought up to the two clasped in each other's arms we need not know—nor, for that matter, need we care.

That they *were* whispering brokenly together in each other's arms is quite enough.

UNDER a low-hanging moon Virginia hurried down the dusty road and turned into St. Bartholomew's churchyard. The evening service was over. The church was quite dark; but from those little mullioned windows in the tower came that faint light that proclaimed Martin Pierce and his lantern within.

She called his name softly as she entered the little stone-floored room where were the levers that rang the chimes. Martin grinned at her.

"Mr. Barrows, he come rumpusin' in here as soon as service was over," said Martin. "You'd oughta 'a' seed him. All het up, he was. Simply scandalous wrath for a clergyman to be showin'. Give me thunder. Hopped round and wanted to know what in time I meant by playin' anything on the chimes like that last tune I'd went and played. Said he'd have the vestry attend to *my* case. Went hop-pin' out again. Never knew he could talk so fast.

"Well, I cal'lates it's all up with this sexton job for me. But I didn't care half so much about it as I thought I would. I cleaned up in here and oiled them

levers for my successor, for I knew well enough things would move fast with the Reverend Mr. Barrows and his dislike for me. And while I was workin' on 'em, back he comes; only this time he aint hoppin' and prancin'. He says it's most unusual to play anything like I had on the chimes and on a Sunday evenin', but it will be overlooked this time. And he drops it out in a round-about way that some one has called him up by 'phone as soon as he got into the rectory and has told him that because that *tune* was played, St. Bartholomew's is goin' to receive that new reredos for the altar he's been wantin' ever since he came here. He—"

Virginia interrupted him, speaking breathlessly. So fast flew her excited tongue that he could scarcely follow the words; but he gathered the import of her remarks and grinned the harder, with encouraging bobs of his head and a superabundance of toothless smiles.

Then, even as on that preceding Friday night, his hand was caught in both the girl's, and again there was that delectable warm, soft, gentle brushing of his wrinkled cheek; only this time it was more pronounced, more unmistakable.

And again light footsteps pattered down the flagged walk, and the churchyard gate creaked on its hinges and banged shut.

Martin Pierce turned to pick up his lantern from the stone floor. He was muttering delightedly to himself as he did so.

"Well, I'll be durned," he chuckled. And, finding this rather too weak an expression of his present feelings, he tried again. "I'll be *gol*-durned!" said Martin Pierce.



TALL women! Don't Make Walking Lighthouses of Yourselves!

Jobyna Howland, who is one of the very tallest of our well-known actresses, and a woman who has made a study of clothes, has prepared a particularly illuminative article on "How the Tall Woman Should Dress."

There are two kinds, she says: those who should be tall and those who shouldn't; and she goes on to tell the one how to appear tall to advantage, and the other how not to appear tall—an article that every woman should read, in the October GREEN BOOK.



Photograph by White, New York

Jobyna Howland

Biff! Bing!—that's "Al" Woods

You have never read anything quite like this GREEN BOOK article about Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Woods—this spectacular couple which has come up on the theatrical horizon together: the oddest, most eccentric pair in the managerial branch, and one of the most successful—dynamic, explosive, breaking every rule of the game.



Photograph by White, New York.

Bernard Granville

Conversation vs. Cocktails

A bright, fast-moving article which tells a story about a woman and two men, many, many well-put words and several quaffs of liquid refreshment—a moral tale, if you will—it's a question,—by Bernard Granville, the comedian, in the October GREEN BOOK.

"How I Bet and Won"

This is what Bertha Mann, of "To-day" fame, might call her article, "A Theatrical 'Sample Room,'" for in it she tells how she staked all she had for a chance at success, how she "displayed her wares," and how she succeeded. One of the most unusual features of the many in October GREEN BOOK.

Laughing Under Difficulties

is what Channing Pollock, the country's greatest dramatic critic, calls his discussion of broiled merri-ment a la Manhattan—Gotham's summer farces, "Twin Beds," "The Third Party," and others—in the October GREEN BOOK.

And Don't Forget

That the October GREEN BOOK contains seven fiction stories—the best of the month.

"The Princess and the Pessimist—A Moral Tale"

by Harris Merton Lyon—one of the keenest, brightest, most forceful bits of writing of the modern day. You'll find it in the October GREEN BOOK.

"Why Are Dramatic Critics?"

Do you know? Most of us must admit that we don't. Charles W. Collins, one of them, confesses. You'll be interested in what he has to say in the October GREEN BOOK—for he really says something, and says it well.

Who Would Suspect That IT is a Man?



in the October GREEN BOOK.

But it is! He is Sweedie, of the slapstick film comedies. Read about how he acts, and all of the terrible, torturing things that happen to him and his fellows when the pictures are in the making—a slapstick article

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EMPTY POCKETS

A NEW NOVEL OF NEW YORK BY RUPERT HUGHES

Continued from page 1096 of this issue

He made some money, and was glad to give the impression of making more—it was the typical American game of bluff, and it helped business.

But it had attracted the attention of the criminals too. Several times the shop had been robbed, with poor results. Now the boy had been stolen to be held for ransom. Teresa broke in that it was a punishment from heaven for her husband's wild ambitions—*punizione d'ambiziosagine*.

Gemma told how the boy Filippo was prized. He was all the sons of his father's house and more precious than all the daughters together. There had been no thought of danger—Filippo had played in the streets or pretended to be a salesman in his father's bakeshop. Sometimes he was allowed to deliver packages—long sticks of bread or cakes. He could be trusted with the bread. If sometimes the cakes were nibbled, nobody minded the marks of his little teeth.

Three days ago, he had gone on such an errand. He had not come back—not to dinner, not in the evening. They had all hunted for him, run through the streets, through all the streets, even through the whole long curves of Mulberry and Mott and through the park named after the Italian who invented America. They had searched even through the "Little Italy" of far-away Harlem.

No bread was made that night; the other bakers were turned loose to hunt. The next day the shop was closed while the search went on. The father had even dared to visit the morgue; he had telephoned the hospitals. He had been desperate enough to notify the police that the boy was lost. A general alarm was sent out with a description of his white waist, his little black breeches, his brown stockings and shoes, his straw hat, his seventy pounds of weight, his big black eyes, black curls, red lips.

This helped the indifferent police not at all, for New York is the largest Italian city in the world save Naples, larger than Rome or Milan. Among the half million Italians scattered through the city, the description of Filippo fitted thousands of little Italian boys. But the Angelilli could not imagine another like their Filippo.

The next day came a terrible letter; it proved that the child had not run away; he had not hated his family or wearied of his home; he had been stolen! Gemma brought out the letter, a plain envelope with the address printed on it in pencil. The postmark was Brooklyn. The message was printed in Italian which even Muriel could see was misspelled and ungrammatical. She Englished it thus:

Angelo Angelillo: Your boy is in our hands. If you love him you will be glad to pay us five thousand dollars which we need. If you love the money more than you love your son keep your money and we will send the boy back to you in a box. If you want to see him alive publish in the *Araldo* this line: "Lost \$5,000 reward for Filippo Angelillo," and we will let you know where to put the money. If you tell the police, you will not see the boy again even in a box.

The letter was not signed except by a rude picture of an open hand in black ink.

Muriel read the letter slowly and put it down as if it were an infernal machine. It chilled her blood with the peculiar cruelty of a crime against a child.

"Did you publish the line in the paper?" she asked.

Gemma shook her head dolefully: "Where shall my fadder find fi' zousan dollari? He has not. He cannot get."

THEN came a thumping of feet on the stairway, and the door was flung open by a young Italian man whose

What will he do ?

What will the tense, crazy-nerved, doped weasel of a man do? Baby's cry calls the mother—baby, mother and this cruel, human vermin in a dark room—that's what burglary is.

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clothes and arms and face were white with flour. He carried a letter in his hand, and he was sure that it was from the boy himself. It had come into the shop pinned to a bag of flour brought by a flour merchant who said that he had not seen it before.

All three were so excited that their hands could neither take nor hold the letter. It fell to the floor and was clutched at and dropped again. It fluttered like a butterfly trying to escape. At last Gemma secured it and ripped it open. She cried that it was from Filippo. He had printed it himself.

Into her hand fell a little black curl of hair. She held it out in her palm. The mother seized it, pressed it to her lips and to her breast and talked to it as if it were alive.

Then Gemma read the letter with greedy joy that curdled at once. Her laughter ended in a gnarr of nausea. She dug her fingers into her breast, and the paper fell again to the floor while she knelt and clinging to the mother chattered insanely.

Muriel hesitatingly picked up the letter and read:

Cara mamma caro babbo ho fame e paura.

She could make out the beginning, the child's first cry. "I am hungry and afraid," but what followed in childish dialect and spelling escaped her. Especially the words "*parsell posto*."

The young baker took the letter from her fingers with a gentle "*Domando per-dona*." He read and fell to beating his eyes with his palms. Muriel turned to him for explanation, and he cried:

"Leetla boy says, 'Pleass send money queeck or man says he gona cut me into—into pieces and senda wan piece avery day by—by—*dio mio*—by post—by parcel post!'"

Muriel felt herself swooning. She kept herself alive only by the necessity of helping these frantic wretches.

Only one hope of rescue occurred to Muriel: to pay the ransom. Somewhere the five thousand dollars must be found.

When she thought of money she thought of her father. She would go to him at once, and make him give it to her.

Of course he would. He'd be only too glad to.

Radiant with inspiration, she knelt by the women again and took their swaying bodies in her arms and kissed their cheeks and called through the mist of fear that enveloped them, repeating again and again in English mingled with such Italian as she could improvise:

"Don't cry—*non piangete; piace!—io andare a mio padre*. He will—*il dare mi le cinque mille dollars*; yes he will—*sì, sì—mio padre very rich—reech—ricco uomo, padre mio—il è milionario, sì—sì*. Filippo will come back. I'll get him—*io—io—presto possibile—please*. don't cry! I come back. *A rivederci*. Good-by!"

Her effort to find the words was almost more tormenting than her sorrow. Finally she beat into Gemma's mind the new hope, and Gemma told her mother. Teresa stared at Muriel incredulously, then caught her about the knees, imploring her by her hope of paradise, by the body of God, by the blood of San Gennaro, by all things imaginable, to save the *piccolo figliolo*.

Muriel backed away promising, promising, and Teresa dragged after her on her knees, kissing Muriel's arms and the hem of her skirt till Gemma unfastened her hands and held her while Muriel escaped.

Just one bright fact glinted in the black smoke about her, and that was the glory and beauty and salvation of the wealth her father had been good enough to build up. Many newspapers published heinous attacks on her father, because of his wealth and the way he got it and kept it. Orators under red flags said that he should be pauperized or assassinated; but she felt that wealth was justified, was sanctified by such opportunities as this.

CHAPTER VIII

MURIEL hurried down the stairway and met the fretful Par-ny, who was about to mount in pursuit of her. She silenced his indignant rebukes, and was just stepping into the car when the silence of the shut-in street was broken by a hub-



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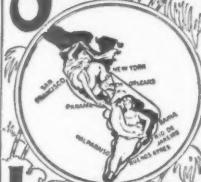
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hub of voices, a man's shrill protests, gruff shouts and women's clamor.

Muriel was fatigued with grief. She had seen two tragedies, and they were enough for one day. But it was not for her to select the number or the nature of her experiences. They were not prepared for her. Thousands of other and equally cruel torments were trying human hearts all over the town, all over the nation, all over the world, perhaps all over the universe.

Let him who would hoard his money or his sympathy stick close at home, for everywhere whoso moves abroad will find empty pockets and souls in need. Muriel had entered life with the scales just fallen from her eyes and the nursery music dying out of her ears. She was encountering realities.

This was more truly her *début* than that recent occasion when her parents gave a "coming-out" party for her and presented her to a select portion of her own world in her best bib and tucker—or, rather, without bib or tucker.

The day after that dancing *entrée* she was the same girl as before. After this day she would never be a girl again. She would have girlish impulses and laughers and mischiefs till her copper hair was silver, but she had won to the title of woman. She was even going to learn something about the Law—a mere tradition of a ghost to those who do not come in conflict with it, but a terrible wrestler to those who do. She was about to witness innocence appealing to humanity for rescue from the law.

As she rose into the tonneau of the car there was a sort of explosion of people from a doorway on the other side of the street. A few children came first, then a woman or two, several gesticulating men, and then two big policemen supporting between them a young woman of uncanny pallor, and an unearthly smile. After the policemen followed a residue of men and women, who kept seizing the officers by the coats. When the police hurled them away with flail-like back-sweeps of their big elbows, they clutched again.

The knot came straggling and swaying along the street till it reached the side of the car.

The chief disturber was a lean and wan young Jew with great eyes and a curly chestnut-colored beard that gave him the look of the pictured Christ—this even in spite of his violence. He kept hurling himself upon the policeman, not striking him, but appealing and clutching past him at his prisoner, who smiled and whispered.

On the other side a hollow-eyed woman trudged, wringing her hands and muttering in an inaudible voice. Her face was a very emblem of poverty in despair.

Muriel was moved to intervene timidly:

"Officer, pardon me; but what is the matter, please? What has the poor thing done? that you're arresting her?"

The mob all turned to the voice from overhead. The policeman, who felt the need of a little sympathy, for his own unpitied estate, looked gratefully up at Muriel's beauty. The sight of her, and her comfortable equipage, and her gentle tone, made an oasis. He took off his hat, wiped the dripping sweatband and leaning on the car-door with the familiarity of authority, explained; while the knot gathered about, watching Muriel as if she were a judge in a high place.

"YOU see, it's like this, Miss. I never made a haul I was so ashamed of, but it's me duty. This poor felly Balinski was gettin' the worst of it over there in Rooshian Poland, and now he's gettin' still worsen over here. Over there he heard that America was the land of the free, and all that old guff. His wife has a brother that's livin' here these twenty years. That's him there—the old one—Sokalski, his name is. The Lord knows he's had rough goin' enough to have wrote Balinski more better than to come over, but he did. And at that maybe it's worse yet in Rooshia.

"Annyhow, Balinski hides his wife and his pretty dahter away from the persecutioners and quit out of there, and over he comes to here—and likes it, too; and by workin' like a dog and eatin' nothin' he saves enough to send over the money for to bring the woman and the gerl across.

"They get through Ellis Island with-



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out a bit of throuble—no tracomy, or annything to turn them back. They're as happy here as only the likes of thim could be who can thank God for not bein' massacred ivery marnin' because the Rooshians want a bit of rifle practice. Thin comes these hard times and all their savin's is gone and they're hard put to it to keep souls in their bodies. On'y for Mr. Sokalski here, who has a family of his own at that, they'd have gone on the Charities. Thin last week poor Balinski gets a job and comes runnin' home with the good news, and what does he find but his daughter has gone to maunderin'. Had ye noticed how whin ye hurry home with good news there's always the bad news there ahead of ye?

"Well, annyhow, this poor gerl, Rachel her name is, is turned to what you can see. She's babblin', and wouldn't the smile of her cut your hairt in two now? Balinski runs for the docther and the docther sends her to the horsepital. And the horsepital, as the lah requires, reports it to the Immigration Board, and the lah requires thim to deport the pore thing."

"Deport her?" Muriel gasped. "Send her back to Russia?"

"Yes, ma'am, that's the lah. If you come over to this country, they'll turn you back if you have eye-throubles or poverty, or brain throubles. If you've none of thim, they give you a year of grace, but if you develop thim in the year, back you go, were you the Imperor himself. There's no *if*, and or *but* about it. The lah says, Back you go to where you come from."

"It's a horrible law," Muriel cried.

"Maybe, but it's for the protection of us that's here."

"But you can't send a poor girl like that back alone. Has she any relatives there?"

"No, they're all over here. Her mother will have to go with her. That's the bad of it. They're not wanted there and they'll suffer the more for running away. But they can't stay here whatever."

"And does the poor husband go back too?"

The officer shook his head: "That's the worst of it all. He daren't go back. He would starve or be jailed or killed."

Balinski, who had listened desperately, hung his pitiful face over the edge of the car. He had gained the impression from the policeman's deference that Muriel must be a personage of authority, a Grand Duchess perhaps. He put his hands out to her, palms hungrily open and twitching, and he prayed to her:

"Lady, please—fine lady, dunnt let dem send me my femmily beck by Russia. You dunnt know vat dey do to us, dose Cossacks: to keel is not all. I cannot go beck mineself. My wife should die and nobody takes care by mein Rachel. Lady—lady—nice lady! I esk you. Please!"

The mother crept forward, too, and stretched out lean hands whose fingers struggled together in an anguish of appeal. She had wept her voice almost away, and her plea was in a raucous whisper: her wept-out eyes were dry and dull. Muriel could neither hear nor understand the language she used, but her eyes and her frantic hands were undeniably eloquent.

The old man Sokalski added his low prayer. Then a girl appeared on the other side of the car—a very beautiful girl with no hat or veil to hide the slumberous glow of her hair. Muriel noted how like in color it was to her own hair.

The girl motioned Muriel closer and spoke softly with hardly more of dialect than a foreignness of intonation:

"Lady—you should do something if you could by Mr. Balinski. He is the brother of my mother. I am Maryla Sokalska. Mr. Balinski did live by us in Orchard Street. He work so hard for the money to bring his wife and that poor girl their daughter. If they go back he says he will make himself dead, for he knows they will die, too. Here they are happy; the poor girl gets well some day. But if you let them go, all will die."

"If I let them go!" Muriel cried. "What can I do?"

"Somebody can do something. It must be so. In this good country it is not meant that the law should kill three good people who work hard and do no wrong. In Russia, yes, but not in America. It is not meant to be so in America."



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"No, no, it must not be so," Muriel groaned. "Somebody must stop it."

"Who will, if not you?" said Maryla.

Muriel never forgot those quiet words. They were like a motto for a life: "Who will, if not you?"

THE officer attempted now to move on. But at the first effort to urge the giggling, whispering Balinski girl forward, her mother and father broke forth into such shrieks that Muriel cried out:

"Wait, wait! It's impossible that such a wicked thing should be done."

"It's done all the time, Miss," said Morahan.

Muriel spoke up with the positiveness of a spoiled child. "Well, it's not going to be done this time! I'll go to the Immigration Board myself!"

Morahan smiled at her warlike tone. "You'll have to go higher than them."

"Then I'll go to Washington. I'll make my father make Mr. Wilson stop it."

She believed that her father could do almost anything he wanted to; and she could make him do almost anything she wanted him to.

She would go to him at once. He was probably at home wondering where she was. But he might have been delayed at his office. Since she was so far downtown, she would make the try.

"François," she said, "*au bureau de mon père.*"

François muttered that it was high time and warning the crowd away with voice and horn, sent the car humming. Muriel called back to the despondent supplicants:

"Don't worry, my father will save you."

As Muriel was whisked round the corner into James Street, she saw the two policemen pressing forward and the mournful flock trudging after.

THE car hurried with impatience along the twisted path of Water Street, under Brooklyn Bridge and on to Wall Street, and up Wall Street to the new skyscraper that housed the bank of which the present Jacob Schuyler was the third president of the name.

His private office was on the seven-

teenth floor. Muriel approached it without the awe of the usual visitor. She called to the office boy:

"Is my father in?" and rushed past him without formality. The oration she planned was equally informal. But when she bolted into the throne-room, she found another man talking to her father.

Old Schuyler nearly went over backward in his swivel chair at Muriel's interruption. When she paused at the sight of the stranger, he said:

"Come in, come in! It's only Mr. Merithew. You've met, haven't you?"

"We have now, to my great delight," said Perry, rising and putting out his hand without waiting for hers. She gave her hand into his and was surprised at the eager warmth and silkiness of his grasp. She drew her fingers free with a little effort and tried to smile cordially, which was more than her father did as he watched the meeting. He meant to cut it short when he said:

"Well, young lady, I'm not home yet, as you see. Been detained here by a dozen things that have turned up."

"Of which I am one," said Perry.

Jacob ignored him: "Have you seen the new books, Muriel?"

"No, I haven't. Fact is, I broke in on you because—"

"How much?"

"Five thousand dollars in cash."

"Stop joking! I'm feeling poor to-day. That library cost me a hundred thousand. What do you want with money? Did your car run over somebody?"

"Yes, but that isn't it. And maybe you'll have to take a trip to Washington for me."

"Good Lord! There's nobody in Washington in this weather except the poor President."

"He's the man I want you to see. You may not have to go, though, but—well—anyway, I want you to keep the Immigration Board from deporting a poor girl who is feeble-minded."

"They can't deport you for a motor accident," was Jacob's pathetic quip.

She smiled politely as she ran on: "And I want the five thousand dollars to ransom a poor little Italian boy with. He has been kidnapped."

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"Great Scott. What you really want, Muriel, is a doctor. Your mother said it was wrong to bring you to town in all this heat."

Muriel grew impatient and fiercely earnest:

"Now, you've got to give this to me, Daddy. It's terribly important. And you've got to use your influence to—but—well, I'll wait till you've finished your business with Mr. Merithew."

"Don't go on my account," said Perry. "I'm here on the same errand as you are. When I ran over your yacht in my hydroplane this morning, it reminded me that your father would have a lot of money loafing around that I could use. So I took the train into town and caught him on the wing. Please don't give her my five thousand dollars, Mr. Schuyler."

Jacob sniffed: "Don't worry; I haven't any money that belongs to either of you."

Muriel protested: "But Daddy, this is to save a little kidnaped boy from being killed by the Black Hand."

"And mine," said Merithew, "is to save an old Knickerbocker from being kidnaped by a little black-mailer."

Muriel froze his frivolous smile with a look of indignation.

Jacob frowned, but Muriel did not understand why. She poured forth the story of the Italian mother. Her father, who was the eternal target for narratives of woe, was touched more by her distress than by what she described, while Perry Merithew, who knew little of such things, was moved to tears. He was an ardent and sincere sentimentalist. Otherwise he could not have been such a success—or was he a failure?—with women. His handkerchief came out, and he thought how beautiful Muriel was in the halo of mercy.

When at the end of the recital, Muriel again demanded the money, her father slowly shook his head. Perry Merithew was almost as horrified as Muriel was. She stormed and wheedled, but Jacob shook his head coldly.

Being an American father, he was used to the rebukes of his children and rather felt pride in their earnestness than anger at their lack of piety. He condescended to explain:

"My dear little girl, I was reading only this morning about this very boy. The paper said that a hundred and fifty Italian children have been kidnaped in the last few years. All their mothers must have suffered agonies. Suppose I had tried to buy all those children back at five thousand dollars apiece. That would cost me seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It wouldn't leave much money for the other poor people, would it? But it would cause the kidnaping of hundreds of other children, wouldn't it?"

Muriel could not endure generalizations. She could not visualize the miseries of the world by wholesale. She could see only those Angelillo women clinging to each other and crying to the world to save their child from torment.

She planted herself on her father's desk and thrust to the floor the unimportant papers of mere banking value. She talked to the old man as to a child, pleading, promising never to bother him again, if he would yield only this once, appealing to his generosity, and picturing again the scene she had witnessed. He watched her with soft eyes, but his mouth was firm and his head swung back and forth with never a dip of consent.

At length Perry Merithew cried out in a burst of emotion as he swallowed hard and batted his wet eyelids:

"I'll tell you, Miss Muriel, you persuade your father to lend me ten thousand, and I'll give you half of it."

Muriel stared at him in amazement. She saw the tenderness in his eyes, and she felt that her father, her cruel father, must have slandered him. She accepted his proffer with enthusiasm.

"Splendid," said Muriel. "And you can come to the slums and see how they take it."

"No thank you," said Perry. "The New York slums is the last place you'll ever find me."

"Then I'll tell them it was your money. You'll lend Mr. Merithew the ten thousand, Daddy, wont you?—please! for my sake."

"It is hardly a bankable proposition," said Jacob, turning and gazing out of the window at the panorama of the city, the river and the bay, all spread before him like a possession. Perhaps he was



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thinking how much of it he owned. Perhaps he was thinking how many people under that multitude of roofs, would be saved from despair, even to triumph, by that five thousand dollars which Muriel wanted to turn over to a gang of criminals, (*pour encourager les autres*), or which Perry Merithew wanted to pay out as a belated installment on one of his love affairs.

No, money was not meant to be profaned by such reckless abuse of either good or bad motives.

SCHUYLER got rid of Merithew by a rigid economy of courtesy, and Perry bowed himself out with well-masked chagrin. Muriel wrung his hand, and thanked him in superlatives, and felt that she had lost a noble champion when he had gone.

Jacob pressed a button in his desk, and his secretary Mr. Chivot was there as by apparition.

"Miss Muriel has run across an Italian atrocity and a harrowing case of deportation. She will give you the names and data. Get a detective and our charity man to work on them at once. Tell 'em to do what's necessary, and if I can help let me know. Give Mr. Chivot the facts, Muriel, and everything will be done the best way."

"But Daddy, I want to help. I want to make sure."

"My child, everything will be done that can be done. I have no desire to hear that your little Italian boy has been cut to bits, or that the poor women have been deported. Mr. Chivot always gets things done. He is far better than any hysterical girl like you."

"But I—"

Jacob was gone. He walked out to the ante-room and instructed a clerk to telephone his yacht to be ready, to telephone the town house that dinner need not be served, and the country house that it need.

When he returned, Muriel was smothering the impassive Chivot with her appeals, and he was assuring her that nothing would be left undone.

"It better hadn't," she said with childish threat. "I'll be down the first thing in the morning."

"We'll go home to dinner now," said Jacob.

They went down in the elevator to the car, and Jacob spoke to Parny in an undertone. The car made good speed northward, but at Twenty-third Street veered east.

"But this isn't the way home," said Muriel.

"Oh, yes, it is," said Jacob. "The yacht's ready."

"But I'm not going out there. I'm stopping in town to-night."

"Oh, no, you're not."

"I am so. If he doesn't let me out, I'll jump."

"Oh, no you won't."

"Then I'll scream and draw a crowd."

"Oh, no you won't."

And of course she didn't. Soldiers do not disobey their officers on parade, and thoroughly bred girls do not scream in the street on any account.

At the landing station, Muriel permitted her father to take her arm and coerce her gently into the launch and thence aboard the yacht.

She watched New York taken away from her, and she chewed the bitter cud of oppression. Her lips twitched with her humiliation and with resolutions of rebellion. Then her heart would race with terror and pity at the fate of the little Angelillo boy, and she blanched to think how that mother and the Balinski mother would be denouncing her as a deserter who promised salvation and took the gratitude and never came back.

AT dinner her father described her actions to her mother and Muriel flashed in a nursery phrase, but in all seriousness:

"I never thought you'd tell Mother on me. I'll never trust you again."

Old Jacob was deeply hurt at this. He was more of an old woman about his children than their mother was.

Mrs. Schuyler delivered Muriel a proper lecture on her duties to herself and to others. She had just reached the De Quinceyan height of saying:

"There's no crime like being inconsiderate, my child. People who are nice about their persons do not wander in the slums. And even if you are careless

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about yourself, you have no right to risk bringing heaven knows what germs into your home. Try to think of others a little, my dear."

Muriel was trying not to think that her darling mother was a heartless fiend. Suddenly she forgot her, and made a choking sound as if she had caught a fishbone in her throat.

"What in heaven's name!" cried her mother.

"Look up!" cried Jacob, but Muriel groaned.

"My doctor, my nice young ambulance doctor! I had an engagement to tea with him in town. What will he think!"

THE rest of the dinner was funeral baked meats to the parents. They shook their heads over their daughter as if she had got her name into a scandal sheet. In one busy day she had kicked over all the structure they had made of her life and her ideals.

But she was worrying about the proper form of apology to the young doctor. She felt more than ashamed for her discourtesy. She felt that she had wounded a dear friend. She saw him turned away from her door in New York, angered, humiliated, bewildered. What must he think!

She went into the telephone-closet and worked over the book, running her finger up and down the wrong page and getting her alphabet horribly twisted as women do when they approach an index. When she had pursued Bellevue hospital to its lair, and while she was repeating the number to herself and smiling already with cordiality over the apologies she would make to the charming, brilliant, heroic Doctor Worthing, the telephone rang at her ear. She answered it coldly:

"Well?"

"Is this Mr. Schuyler's house?"

"Yes."

"Is Miss Muriel Schuyler at home?"

"I'll see. Who wants her?"

"This is the yacht club. Mr. Merithew would like to speak to her."

"All right."

Another voice, peremptorily: "Hello, hello!"

Muriel in her own voice: "Hello."

"Miss Schuyler, please."

"This is Miss Schuyler."

The same voice with maple syrup poured over it: "Oh, how do you do?"

"How do you do?"

"I say, Miss Schuyler—"

"Yes, Mr. Merithew."

"I've got it."

"Got what, Mr. Merithew?"

"Your five thousand dollars."

A scream of incredulous joy: "No!"

"Umm-humm! Met a friend who's been selling the market short and touched him for ten. So I'm going to ransom your little Dago for you."

"You're an angel!"

"Thanks."

"Will you send the money over—or perhaps you'd rather bring it?"

"Neither. You've got to earn it."

"How?"

"They're dancing here to-night, and you've got to come over and give me one maxixe."

"H'm. I don't see how I can, very well."

"Not for five thousand dollars for one dance? That's more than the Castles get for a whole week."

"Well, I—er—"

She had seen that Perry Merithew was not afraid of anything. He was not afraid even of proposing such an adventure to her. But she was just a little afraid of him. Still, his voice was indescribably gentle, as he pleaded:

"Not for the little Italian boy's sake? Salome danced a man's head off: you can dance a boy's head on."

"Well, of course, when you put it that way."

"The orchestra's fine to-night, too. Just as we finish that hand-twirling business in the maxixe, you'll find five thousand dollars in your palm, and nobody else needs to know; just you and me."

"We-ell, all ri-ight."

Her voice was slow, but her heart was drumming like a startled partridge.

The next installment of "Empty Pockets" will be in the November Red Book, on the news-stands October 23rd.

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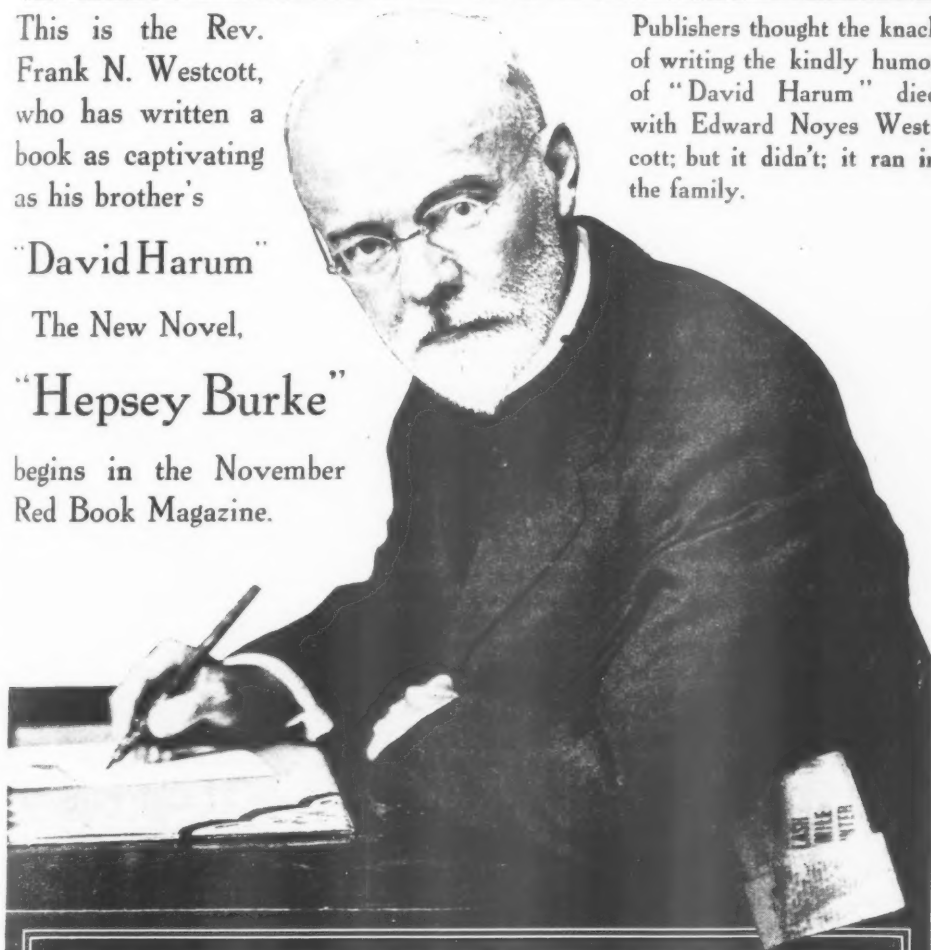
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cott; but it didn't; it ran in
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"Next to an old friend, a bright wood fire's the best thing I know to keep one from getting lonesome."

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Continued from page 1070

"No, I don't think they do!" avowed Larry. "I don't think they do!"

"I *know* that my instincts are right! I know it," she protested, yet the very protestation showed that some touch of doubt still remained with her.

"I rather think I'd like to interview this young man," asserted Larry.

"That's what I was hoping, what I was going to suggest," murmured Larry's companion, with brightening face. "You are of the same calling. You would do him justice. And you—might possibly bring him up to tea some afternoon."

And she gazed with melting and meaning eyes at the altogether unsubjugated Larry.

"I bring him up to tea?" he ejaculated as he rose from his chair. Georgina Van Slyke seemed to misjudge the source of his emotion.

"Father need never know," was her serene and soothing response. "And one word from Jules would put an end to this!"

"Egad, madam, and I'll see you get that word!" declared the cryptic Larry, with an ardor which tended to mystify the melancholy-eyed young lady so languidly extending her hand to him.

IV

THAT hurrying figure with the green baize foil-case still under its arm was not so much as accosted by the somnolent-eyed door-man of the Standard. This python-like personage, in fact, accepted Larry as the German trombone-player arriving unusually early for a rehearsal. And it was as well for the Standard's door-man that he made this slight mistake, for there were volcanic fires raging within the breast of Larry; nothing short of a stone wall, I venture, would have stopped him.

Yet as he entered that narrow door

and saw the familiar outline of a call-board and passed down a narrow passageway and confronted that old, that familiar, that intangible odor which pervades the back of every stage, his steps became less hurried, in spite of himself. As his nostrils were assailed by that vague and aromatic mustiness, he remembered, with a pang, that it was a long, long time since he had passed through a stage entrance. A thousand memories came surging into his already surging brain. A thousand memories touched with mingled pain and pleasure. And as he groped his way on through the semi-darkness, past flats and paint-frames and crowded props, he knew that a scene-rehearsal was taking place on the stage itself, out under the big, gloomy dome of the fly-loft. He could hear a resonant and impatient voice barking out angry corrections, calling out orders and then countermanding them.

"Don't keep driving Titfield up against the back-drop that way!" called the voice. "This fight's got to be kept down stage!"

"How can I help crowding back?" cried another and almost as impatient voice. "I've got to engage him. And I can't engage him without following after him!"

"Then you, Titfield, stand up to him, for the love o' Heaven, stand up to him! Don't back out over those parapets the way you did last night. What I want in this scene is a *fight*, a *FIGHT*! That's what Broadway's paying its two dollars a seat for. And instead of a sword-fight we're giving them six minutes o' feather-duster waving! Dam' it, man, get some ginger into your work! Now, let's try that scene again! And you supes back there, you extra people, *wake up*! Get a little life there, Dead-face!"

Larry peered out at the speaker, glared out at the self-confident, audacious,

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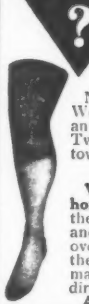
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shirt-sleeved figure, and he knew, instinctively, that he was looking on his enemy. He knew it—and at the first glimpse he disliked that enemy, he abominated him. Anyone with half an eye could see there was something brazen and tricky and shifty about the man.

And Larry rejoiced in the discovery that he abhorred him, abhorred everything about him, from his vulgar and domineering manner of speech to his calm and cocksure strut. It made things much easier for Larry. And it also reminded him that these were the methods of the newer generation, the manners of the latter-day upstarts who had divorced dignity from the profession.

His twin fires of indignation made him so hot that unconsciously he took off his overcoat. And those fires were still raging when Larry's enemy brusquely and impatiently ordered the action to stop.

"All wrong! All wrong!" And as he strode back and forth he could be heard to exclaim: "That man Titfield's sure going to drive me crazy, *crazy*!"

Larry, at this point, pushed aside the scattered group that stood in the wings. He strode out to the center of the stage where the shirt-sleeved owner of the strident voice, almost in tears, was beseeching an older and stouter man to please, please remember that "cross" did not come, must not come, until he spoke the words, "My lips are sealed: I cannot speak!"

THE unheralded advent of Larry brought a pause to the movement and the voices on the stage. But that pause did not last long. It was broken by Larry himself as he came to a stop within two paces of his shirt-sleeved enemy.

"Are you Jules Goodall?" demanded Larry.

The man in his shirt-sleeves did not answer. He merely viewed the intruder with a cold and abstracted eye. Then he turned away and started towards the property-room.

"Are you Jules Goodall?" repeated Larry after him.

Then came the surprise of Larry's life.

"No, *I'm* Goodall!" spoke up a voice

on Larry's right. He wheeled about to see a still youthful-looking actor with his sleeves rolled up and a foil in his hand. This young man looked thin and tired and worried.

"Then I desire to speak with you, sir," declaimed Larry,—"in private."

The worried young actor turned and stared at the strange old figure with the green baize bag under his arm.

"If you've got anything to say to me, say it now," was his truculent retort. He was already looking over Larry's head, making a motion for his company to reassemble. Larry could hold himself in no longer. He drew himself up to his full five feet five.

"I say that you are a puppy, sir!" were the somewhat startling words that re-echoed through the cavernous quietness. "A young puppy, sir! And I also contend, sir, that you are a liar and a coward!"

Jules did not even look at Larry. He wheeled about to the wings where the stage-hands stood.

"Who let this nut in here?" he demanded, with the peevish exasperation of a man ill-treated beyond endurance. "Mr. Kloefer," he shouted. Then: "O'Reilly, where are you?"

But Larry was not to be side-tracked in any such offhand manner. Those fires were too Vesuvian to be lightly banked. He held a quivering finger up in the face of the young actor.

"When I was your age, sir, the indiscreet utterances of an undisciplined tongue were curbed with cold steel, sir, with cold steel!"

"Take him away, somebody! Oh, take him away!" groaned the worn-out young actor, as though his cup of bitterness were too full for even further argument.

Larry stood his ground, removing his right glove as he did so.

"It was crude, sir, our old-fashioned method of letting light in on the mind through a hole in the body. But it had one advantage, sir—the advantage of removing from our midst the corrupter of youth and the deceiver of women!"

The young actor's face became a shade paler.

"Stop right there! You've said enough! I'll stand for no more of this!"

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"Then, sir, you'll stand this!" And flat against that autocratic young star's face Larry brought his folded glove, his many-patched, faded, roughened old dog-skin glove. And at that precise moment Kloefer, Jules Goodall's manager, stepped out from the property-room to the wings, and beheld enough of the scene to realize the need of prompt action.

"Here you," he bawled out. "O'Reilly! Schmitt! Casey! Get this drunken nut out o' my theatre! Throw 'im out!"

And the stage-hands thus addressed, momentarily paralyzed as they had stood at that autocratic invasion of the territory over which they were accustomed to rule as czars, at that peremptory command came to their senses.

They descended on Larry from the wings, each of them armed with a stage-brace. But even as they came Larry whipped out his foil, dropped his green baize bag, and as the rotund actor behind the star caught and held Jules Goodall back, Larry himself wheeled and faced his new enemies.

And about the time-worn boards of that stage, seamed and scarred with other battles, but battles that had been nothing more than pretence, took place an encounter as swift and moving as any ever enacted in romantic drama. Larry, nimble-footed as he was, would surely have gone down, had he been less adroit of wrist or less quick of judgment.

A stage-brace, in the hands of a mechanic necessarily muscular, becomes a somewhat intimidating weapon. Three of them, in the hands of three muscular mechanics, may prove more than merely disconcerting. And a fencing-foil, on the other hand, is an attenuated and innocuous-looking instrument. Yet with a well-trained arm and an alert eye behind it, it is not utterly to be despised.

LARRY knew his tool. He knew that a quick, light tap of the "forte" could turn aside the heaviest of lunges. He had long since learned how a good "counter" could envelop and deflect his opponent's stroke. He knew just what that slender blade of steel could do, just what it could stand, just what a quick wrist-turn could effect. And he

had long since been taught to keep his head, even in the tightest of corners. His attitude, in fact, as those three burly opponents advanced on him, seemed one of jaunty indifference. He did not fall back an inch.

"Throw 'im out, boys!" bawled the indignant manager.

And the boys proceeded to throw him out. But they went about it with certain precautionary movements; for, mark you, all men have an innate and inalienable dislike for naked steel, even though it chances to have a nubbin of a button on the end of it.

So when the man called O'Reilly thought to sweep Larry's foil out of his hand, in one stroke not unworthy of Hans Wagner himself, the stroke, for some mysterious reason, went wild and an instant later O'Reilly was the recipient of a stinging whip across the ear with Larry's foil. And when the other two tried to close in on Larry they met with a similar fate, though by this time the agile Larry was skipping and dancing about the Standard's dusty boards as lightly as a March lamb on an upland pasture.

Then the fight became more general, more of a *mêlée*, more of a shamble and scuffle up and down the stage. But through it all Larry kept his head, countering, parrying, engaging, whipping and prodding his assailants into a blind fury of pain, flailing them about the neck and knuckles, cracking them on the heads, until one, backing off with a torn ear went headforemost over the footlights into the music-stands, and the other, suddenly dropping his brace, fled incontinently up into the fly-loft, where he tried to loosen sand-bags to drop on Larry's head.

O'Reilly, battling alone, was driven across the stage and into one of the wings, where he would surely have been spitted like an ortolan, for the button by this time had been hammered off that ill-treated foil, had not Jules Goodall himself broken loose from restraining hands and projected himself into the encounter.

The result of this intervention was that Jules, whose fencing prowess was being so extensively extolled in the

How Maude Adams Became a Star

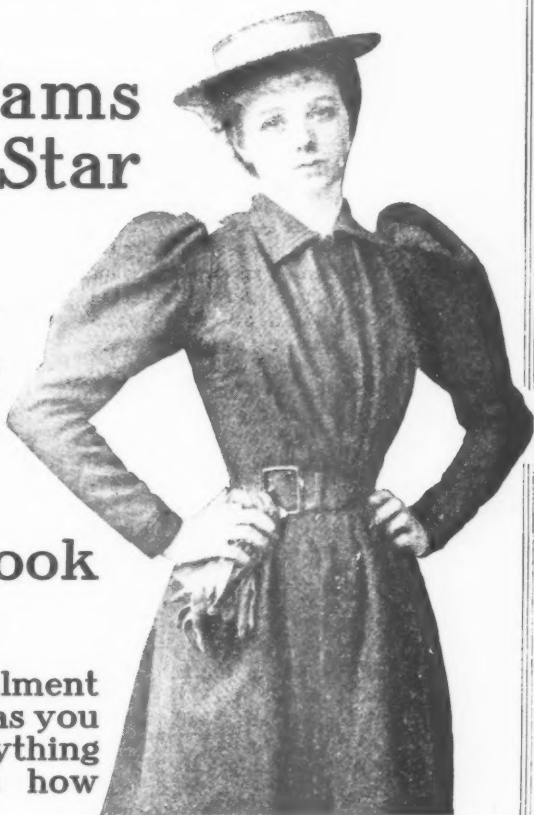
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theatrical columns of the Sunday newspapers, found himself driven across the stage in the midst of lightning-like thrust and lunge and parry and counter—driven, in fact, to the very parapet over which he himself had the habit of driving the spiritless Titfield.

There he had the good judgment to take guard and engage in "quarte" rather than "sixte"—as the erudite Larry would have phrased it. This gave him the protection of an arm across his body, so that when Larry's final mad plunge came, instead of being pinned through the heart as he might very easily have been, the driving foil went straight for that two-headed muscle familiarly known as the biceps, where, luckily, it struck home on the heavy gold cuff-link hidden under the actor's up-turned shirt-sleeve.

And what the next sally would have been, Heaven only knows, had not some one suddenly thought of the fire-hose. And this same fire-hose was brought into play, promptly, on the back of our hot-headed and brave old Larry.

NOW, cold water, at the best, is an effectual damper on all things, quickly chilling the ardor and discomfiting the body over which it is directed. It is an enemy which proves both intangible and elusive, a maddening, incorporeal, insubstantial sort of enemy which can be neither slashed nor prodded nor pinned down. So Larry, gasping, shouting his incoherent and impotent defiance to the world at large, was washed out, literally washed out of the wings and out through the stage entrance of the Standard, ignominiously, helplessly, relentlessly, with his hat and coat and foil-case thrown irately after him.

And there he would surely have been chilled to the bone and stricken with pneumonia, or have been overtaken with influenza, or have fallen a victim to the acutest of muscular rheumatism, had not the last moments of his bewildering struggle been witnessed by a gracious and liquid-noted leading lady—a leading lady who passionately hated Jules Goodall for "crabbing" her points in the big scene of the third act! It was, ac-

cordingly, this leading lady who slipped out of the theatre and pushed our hero's arms into her own opulent seal-skin, and patted him on the back, and declared that he was a darling and a courageous old gentleman, and ordered her *chauffeur* to whisk Larry home in the limousine, and then called after him to be sure to send back the seal-skin with the car.

"Tell him—that jackanapes," fumed the sodden but still unextinguished old fire-eater, "tell him that he'll pay for this!"

"How will he pay for it?" asked the leading lady as she buttoned the seal-skin coat over Larry's chest very much like a mother making a small boy ready for school.

"Why, damme, madam, in the only way possible—with blood, madam, with blood!" piped the ecstatic Larry. "And you tell him his seconds 'll find me, Lawrence de Martillet Doogan, at my place of residence, madam, one flight up over Krafft's Bakery, Greenwich Village!"

And Blinkie, the bake-shop boy, with his eyes all but popping out of his head, had the unique experience of beholding his neighbor and counselor of the upper floor alight with dignity from the most fabulous of vehicles, with equal dignity toss off a heavy seal-skin wrap, and then with less dignity dodge perspiring and red-faced down to the bake-ovens. And there, having secured fresh raiment, he posted Blinkie as a look-out, and promptly but I fear somewhat profanely effected a complete change of attire.

And hot as were the bake-ovens behind him, the fires of rage in his heart at the thought of Jules Goodall were even hotter. And when he had collected his wits and his damp apparel, he suddenly remembered how completely poor Spider had passed out of his mind.

So he trotted contritely out and purchased for her a pint of fresh oysters, which he sent upstairs by Blinkie, for he had not the heart, that night, to visit Spider in person. And the plump-bosomed Miss Biddle, who had her own views as to diet for patients, promptly inspected the oysters, promptly cooked them on Larry's gas-stove, and, her pa-

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tient still slumbering, as promptly ate them.

But Larry himself, that night, eschewed the dusty comforts of the flour-room, and feeling the need of quiet and rest, indulged in the extravagance of a room and a real bed at the Mills Hotel, where he slept long and deep, and occasionally dreamed that he was spearing Spider's helpless babe on the point of his foil and toasting it over the smoke-stack of a spurning fire-engine.

V

WHEN Larry arrived at the bake-shop the next morning, he was confronted by Blinkie, as round-eyed as an owl, who stood with his heels apart and a bit of a pout to his chest as he silently handed Larry a neatly folded sheet of paper.

And this sheet of paper, Larry found, was a formally worded challenge from none other than Jules Goodall, who, having duly presented his compliments, claimed, for insults received, the privilege of meeting M. Lawrence de Martillet Doogan in single combat at a time and in a place to be arranged by their mutual seconds.

And Larry, while the tingling Blinkie retired to work the flour out of his hair and adorn himself in his funereal Sunday best, indited an equally formal reply, presenting his compliments to Mr. Jules Goodall and expressing not only his pleasure at the chance of meeting Mr. Jules Goodall, but also his willingness to abide by any arrangement made by his second, the bearer of this note.

As Larry was pacing back and forth, pondering with just what stroke and parry and *riposte* to meet the recreant Jules, he was sought out by the accusatory Mrs. Krafft, who somewhat icily asked him why he had never been up to see Spider, and if he was aware that she was still on earth and had been asking for him ten times a day.

So Larry, loath as he was to confront Spider at such a time and under such a cloud, went somewhat sheepishly and shamefacedly up to his old-time room, and saw a much more vigorous-looking Spider than he had expected. She was

vigorous enough, in fact, to send her nurse off on a quite unnecessary message, and alone with Larry, to be deliberately and mendaciously chilly. And so she remained, until he rather timidly took her hand, and started to pat and rub it, guardedly, however, as though it were a strange cat with whom he ought to make acquaintance. Finding this safe, he essayed to slip one hand under her shoulder, whereat she gave a little cry, and her arms went up to him and she hung on as only Spider could. So he surrendered to those capturing arms, and half-squatted and half-knelt down beside the bed and kissed her. And that loosened the flood-gates of her feelings, and for no earthly reason that Larry could imagine, she clung to him and cried. And he kissed her again, on both cheeks, and patted her chin. And Spider, despite Larry's protests, proceeded to sit up on the couch. Then he looked uneasily about the room, and cleared his throat, and shifted his position, and rather tentatively and hesitatingly asked if he might possibly see *it*.

And Spider, with a gurgle of happy pride, carefully turned down the coverlet she had been holding in a floppy sort of bundle, and put her arm out like a wing, and in the sheltering curve of her shoulder Larry beheld *it*. And it was so bald and tiny and slant-eyed and such a beef-steaky-looking mass of wrinkled helplessness that for the life of him Larry could only hold his breath and struggle as best he could to hide his horror.

Then Spider, noting his silence, raised to Larry's face half reproachful and half questioning eyes. He knew that something more was expected of him. He knew it quite well; but time was necessary to re-marshal his shattered battalions. Then, by the most manful of efforts, he pulled himself together. He hemmed and hawed, bent lower, touched the pulpy mass of babyhood with a timid finger, clucked with his tongue, put his arms on his hips, his head on one side, and took a deep breath.

"Spider," he avowed, with all the pride at his command, "Spider, I never saw such a baby! *Such a baby!*"

"Isn't he a dear?" gurgled Spider.



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"And, oh, Pop, just feel his fingers! See how they can hang on!"

Larry, having tested the prehensile power of the diminutive fingers, realized that he had at least made a beginning. He re-examined the infantile head under the shadow of Spider's wing-like arm.

"Spider," he declared, "I do believe he's going to have a head like Booth! Why, damme, m'am, it's exactly like Booth's!"

"Honest, Pop?" asked Spider, all eyes. And though her solemnity disturbed Larry's conscience a little, he stuck to his claim.

"Then you don't think he looks like me?" inquired Spider, studying the tiny head under her wing.

"N-o-o!" confessed Larry. "I rather imagine he favors his father!"

Spider's wing suddenly dropped. The look of brooding calm, of inconsequential and happy contentment, died out of her face.

"Sit down, Pop, please," she said, with a changed and abstracted stare. "I want to talk to you."

LARRY sat down. Spider looked at him. Then she looked at the wall, with her mouth puckering.

"Oh, Pop, you've been an angel to me," she cried, with a gush of tears. "You've been too good to me—too, too good to me, from the day I was born! And I don't deserve it! I don't! I don't!"

"There, there, my dear!" cajoled the ill-at-ease Larry. "You must be quiet! Quiet, you know! Quiet!" And he essayed certain suggestive and undulatory movements of the hand, such as hypnotists resort to in the exercise of their esoteric arts.

"He doesn't love me, Pop!" confessed Spider, in the elliptical manner of incoherent misery.

"Who doesn't?" demanded the stern-browed Larry.

"The man—the man I married," was Spider's answer.

"That's absurd!" blustered Larry. "It's impossible—it's ridiculous!"

"He never did—never!" declared Spider.

"Damme, madam, I don't believe it! I can't! It's—it's inconceivable! No

human being could help loving you! No—"

But the wind died out of Larry's sails. He knew what he knew. A wistful trouble crept over his blustering old face.

"Er—did he—er—leave you, Spider?"

"No, I left him," she finally confessed. "But it was only to keep him from making the first move—it was only to save my pride, Pop."

"You left him?" cried the astounded Larry.

"Yes, I knew he was better off without me. He knew it, too, when his chance came. He thought more of his chance than he did of me. That hurt—oh, how it hurt! And now, Pop, he's a great man. And he doesn't know—oh, he doesn't know!"

"He doesn't deserve to know!" exploded Larry, with a fury which made Spider bury her head in a pillow.

"I don't think he'd care," she said in her weak and plaintive monotone.

"Then why 'd he marry you?" demanded Larry, striding back and forth, smiting his chest as he put this poser to Spider, who, in turn, sighed and blinked thoughtfully at the walls.

"It was loneliness, I think, and pity," she finally said, apparently as much to herself as to Larry. "We were in that road company together—that terrible road company on that terrible grape-vine circuit! We were happy, so happy it used to give me goose-flesh, just to stop and think of it, that first month or two!"

"Go on!" prompted Larry.

"Then we played Chicago for a week, at one of the dollar houses. Uhlmann saw him there, and studied his work, and then came round and announced he had a new play, a play called 'The Rose and the Princess,' that would fit him like a glove. He gave him the script to study over. He forgot me—me who needed him most—then. From the afternoon he knew he was going to be a star, he changed. I knew what it meant. I knew I'd lose him. It frightened me. I went to Uhlmann and tried to scare him off. And that made Jules angry. He called me a mill-stone—think of it, Pop, a mill-stone!"

You Know Me, Al!

(As the now-famous Bush-Leaguer would say)

I wouldn't never
tell you nothin'
wrong, and I'm
givin' you a tip you can
play cleanacrost the board:



Read

"Back to Baltimore"

A Story of Baseball and Woman

By RING W. LARDNER

the keenest humorist since Mark Twain

In the

November Issue of
The Red Book Magazine

ON ALL NEWS-STANDS
OCTOBER TWENTY-THIRD

"The brute!" ejaculated the somewhat partisan Larry.

"And now we'd be two mill-stones," said Spider, with a pat under the coverlet and a teary little laugh. "So it's just as well, Pop, isn't it?"

Larry found himself without anything to say.

"He sent me money," explained Spider, "at the end of his first week—a hundred dollars. But I sent it back!"

Larry stared about him, dejected and perplexed.

"Spider," he gently probed, "was there—er—was there another woman in the case, so to speak, when you—er—you left your husband?"

"Of course not!" said the indignant Spider.

"That began later, I s'pose?" prompted the forlorn Larry.

"They'd go after him, of course," admitted Spider, not without a touch of perverse pride. "He's so handsome! so manly! so appealing!"

LARRY betrayed a tendency to be restive. It was not the first time he had listened to that pean in praise of Jules Goodall. And he found it hard to keep from emitting a sheeplike cry of disgust.

He knew quite enough. And as he peered guardedly about in search of the *fleur-de-lis* above the cherry-wood bookshelves, his eye fell on the nickel alarm-clock, and he saw it was after ten. And bestowing a misplaced kiss on the bridge of Spider's nose, the straightest, slenderest little bridge that was ever built, he scurried about and was off in a twinkling.

But a more observant person than the preoccupied Spider might have noticed that he carried off with him the sharp-pointed dueling-sword from above the cherry-wood shelves. It was a pretty kettle of fish, he confessed to himself; but before another day was over, there would be a few things set straight, or he would know the reason.

BLINKIE'S answer came earlier than

Larry had looked for. After the customary compliments had been duly presented, it said that it had been agreed

that to prevent police interference the engagement at arms should take place on the empty stage of the Standard Theatre at eleven o'clock of the next morning.

"I think they are cookin' something up on us!" said Blinkie, uncomfortable in his Sunday best. "I don't know what it is, but look out for treachery!"

EARLY that evening, Blinkie spied Larry in front of the bake-shop and strode darkly out to inform him for the second time of a secret belief that they were "cookin' something up on us." Just what it was he could not say. He was, in fact, still attempting to articulate the inexpressible, when he was further bewildered to see a stately landaulet upholstered in dove-gray draw up at the curb and from its door an equally stately lady beckon down to the somewhat indifferent-eyed Larry.

Blinkie, unable to hear what took place between that conversing couple, became secretly persuaded that Larry was mysteriously involved in vast and international intrigues, intrigues which were perhaps to make thrones totter and monarchs quake.

Larry, however, was very composed about it. As that sumptuously furred and muffed and turbaned figure leaned from the landaulet and conversed with him, he knew that he was looking into the face of a woman to whom life had denied very little. For it was Georgina Van Slyke who had sought him out, Georgina, tremulous with uncertainty, quivering to know why Larry had failed in his promise.

"Madam, I meet Jules Goodall by appointment to-morrow morning," was Larry's laconic and deep-toned response—and Larry's tones, I may add, were always a shade deeper when he addressed the ladies.

Yet as he looked up at her, Larry's inner self was saying, as inner selves have the habit of doing: "You are a very beautiful young lady, with your furs and your cars and your hothouse flowers, yes, and your ambrosial quince jams, and life has given you about everything. But here is where I'm going to trump life's ace and sweep your little tuppenny ro-

HARRY LAUDER

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Harry Lauder



Tuxedo Keeps the World in Good Humor

Here is a man whose life work is to make millions of people happy. In pursuing his calling, he travels the wide world over. He is a great lover of his pipe, and in all sorts of corners of the earth he has tried all sorts of tobaccos. What is his unqualified statement in regard to Tuxedo? Read it again: *"I've yet to find its equal."*

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THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY

mance right off the table!" And Larry felt that he would like to lead her up those narrow stairs behind him and show her two precious lives that she and her scatter-brain young paramour were on the eve of making into kindling-wood.

"Oh, I must warn you," the woman in the landaulet was saying. "Father suspects something. I imagine Spruggins must have been eavesdropping. So we must be very, very careful!"

"You may trust me, madam, to be very, very careful," responded Larry with his courtliest of bows.

"Tell him my future is in his hands," murmured the woman in the dark furs.

"Egad, then," cried Larry, "his responsibilities are vast!"

"And give him this, for me," she said, as she lifted a red rose from the vase bracketed against the dove-gray upholstery and handed it out to Larry. "He will understand!"

And Larry, as the door closed and the landaulet purred away, stood blinking down at that solitary red rose, bewildered by the tangles, the complexities, of the new life that had descended upon him. And Blinkie, beholding that wistful figure studying the solitary red flower, thrilled with envy at the thought of Larry's secret adventures and the intrigues too dark even to be guessed at.

VII

AS befitted an occasion so august, Larry arrayed himself not in the check tweed so redolent of *Camille's* sorrows, but in his one other and more ceremonial suit, the garb that first adorned him as *Eccles* in "Caste." A solemn black, it was about to call it—and black it may once have been. But during the last few years it had shown a tendency to fade, until, in truth, it was almost a bottle green, the impassive green of a street-cabby's livery.

Yet it was a very presentable suit. Larry felt, with its once frayed sleeves carefully bound with black tape, with the trouser-legs a trifle short, perhaps, having twice been turned in to conceal the fringe that simply *would* persist in showing itself about the heels.

And having breakfasted amply on oat-

meal-porridge and coffee and wheat-cakes, and having inspected the tingling Blinkie and remarked on the snug fit of his Sunday best, he coached that adventurous youth in the customs and procedure of mortal combat.

Blinkie, as they set forth for the Standard's stage-entrance, with the green baize foil-case for once under his arm, vaguely regretted that the encounter was not to take place, as all such encounters should, exactly at day-break, and in some lonely park or wood at the outskirts of the city, with a black-hooded cab drawn up somewhere in the distance and gentlemen in Inverness coats standing about in the snow.

Once within the gloomy cavern of the Standard's cleared stage, however, Blinkie, who had never before penetrated that mystic region beyond the asbestos-curtain, was so overcome with wonder that his eyes went as round as saucers, his jaw relaxed, and he betrayed a decidedly disheartening tendency to gape. Larry, as grim and trim as a veteran on parade, had to nudge his second, surreptitiously, and on one occasion, when Jules and his manager and his seconds stepped solemnly out from a smoke-filled dressing room, was compelled to pinch him sharply enough to make him squeal.

It was Kloepper, the manager, who crossed the stage and in open violation of all customary procedure, addressed himself to Larry.

"I want to talk to you," he said.

Larry looked at him with an eye of steel.

"My second, sir," he explained, pointing to Blinkie.

"Send that kid away!" commanded Kloepper, a little impatiently. "And let's get down to hard-pan!"

"My second, sir!" roared Larry, once more indicating the abashed Blinkie.

"Oh, confound your seconds! I've got you here and I'm going to keep you here until I tell you a few plain truths!" He faced Larry, quite unimpressed by his glare. "You intend to fight Goodall, don't you?"

"I do!" declared the grim old swordsman.

"Well, you're going to. But I've got a say in this!" Here he raised his voice
(Continued on fifth following page.)

and called, "O'Reilly, are those two officers in Number One?"

"They are, sir," came the answer from the shadowy wings.

"I've got a say in this," continued Kloefer. "And if you're going to fight Goodall, you're going to do it in just one way."

"And in just what way, might I inquire?"

Kloefer folded his arms.

"As *Count Marco*, six nights and two matinées, Dammit, man, d' you s'pose I want my new star skewered and the Indian sign hung on a run that's good for a quarter of a million dollars? I'd fill this theatre with police reserves and see you sent up the River before I'd stand for that! Wait! Just hold your horses there! I've been investigating you, Mister Doogan, since you invaded my theatre and blame near murdered three of my best stage-hands. You've got the sword-play and the ginger we've been scouring this city for. And we want you for that third-act fight. You're the type, you're the man, just made to fill up that third-act hole. We haven't been giving 'em half enough fighting, and they're hungry for it. And we're going to fatten up that *Count Marco* part and put you in it on a contract at a hundred a week!"

Larry calmly raised his right hand above his shoulder and gave a loud and contemptuous snap of the fingers.

"Ha," he scoffed. "Contracts! What do I want with contracts from such as you? And you?" For the advancing figure of Jules Goodall had added sudden fire to his fury. "I have a contract here, sir," he cried, swinging about on the newcomer and slapping himself on his faded green coat-front as he spoke, "I have a contract here made by you and broken by you!"

"What are you driving at this time?" demanded the tired-eyed Jules. And for answer Larry dug down in his breast-pocket and produced a sadly faded and crushed rose.

"This, sir, is for you," he mockingly declaimed.

"For me?" said Jules, taking it as though it were a counterfeit dollar. "And from whom, please?"

"From your—your admirer," hissed

out the irate Larry. "From Georgina Van Slyke."

Jules did not change color. He merely tossed the rose into one of the wings.

"Oh, *that* idiot!" he cried.

"Sir, you are speaking disrespectfully of a lady," stormed Larry. "A lady, sir, however injudicious she may have been!"

"A nut, you mean?" corrected the indignant and practical-minded Jules. "She's been sending me mash-notes for a month. I think she's woozy!"

"And what have you sent her?" demanded Larry.

"Nothing, of course! I've never even seen her! Good Heavens, man, haven't I had enough trouble trying to save this four-flush of a play, without going out and hunting up more?"

"Why, damme, sir, you intend to run away with this woman!"

"Who said that?"

Larry stared at the man.

"She did, herself!" he proclaimed.

"Then she *is* nutty! I've never met her or spoken to her. And I wouldn't run away with her if she owned the Kimberley Mines!"

LARRY dropped back a little and supported himself by catching at the edge of a soiled paint-frame. All his universe, it seemed, was tumbling and crashing down about his ears. But it was too much. Larry refused to believe it.

"Then I s'pose you never met Edwina de Martillet?" he challenged.

It was Jules' turn to step back and stare at his adversary.

"That's my wife, sir—be careful!"

"What makes her your wife?" demanded Larry.

"I resent this—this insolence!"

"Then why did you leave her?" harried the old actor.

"I never left her. *She* did the leaving."

"And you followed her?" demanded the mocking Larry. "You sought her out?"

He could see that each stab cut deep, as deep as any *fleur-de-lis* point. Jules, in fact, was the color of a badly baked Kraft muffin.

"She wouldn't let me," he sorrowfully admitted. "She said the last tie 'd been broken."

The eyes of the two men met. A silence, painful as most epochal silences are, hung between them. Then Larry looked away, to where, after all, his topsy-turvy, tumble-down universe lay in ruins.

"Sir," he said with much solemnity, "I must speak to you in private."

And leading Jules to one side, he placed a hand on his shoulder, and whispered certain cryptic words into his ear.

What these words were neither Blinkie nor Kloefer could make out. But they saw Jules start back, look dazedly about him, and emit one explosive and unbelieving "No!"

And Larry, in turn, emitted an equally explosive "Yes!"

"No!" repeated the dazed Jules.

"Yes!" maintained the exultant Larry.

Jules sat down and looked at his fingernails. Then he mopped his brow, got up again, stared at Larry, and again subsided weakly on a property chair.

IT was the impatient voice of Kloefer that broke the silence.

"Well, are we going to play lizzie-house round here all morning, or are we going to get that third act together?"

Larry's eyes strayed from the colorless face of the invertebrate Jules to the tormentor wing, to the row of footlights, to the switch-board and the calciums, to the bulging box-fronts, to the receding pit and the beetling gallery curves. His nostrils inhaled the familiar, the be-

leaguering, the intoxicating old aroma of stage-dust and scenery paint. He began to realize what it would mean, after all those years. And even before this, he remembered what one hundred dollars a week would mean—a hundred dollars in a little yellow envelope, every Tuesday night.

He twisted up his quizzical old face. He puckered up a thoughtful brow. He cast about him for objections. He squinted round a little shamefacedly at Blinkie. He hemmed and hawed, started to speak, spluttered, and actually turned pink.

"You with us, then?" prompted the impassive Kloefer.

Larry startled them by suddenly bringing a determined fist down on the edge of the deal table beside him.

"Only on one condition, sir!" he cried with the finality of ineluctable Fate.

"What's that?"

"That you investigate the plans and specifications of my patented Revolving Stage!"

"Sure!" promptly agreed Kloefer. Then he turned and called after Jules. "Hold on there, Mr. Goodall, hadn't we better fix up this contract with Mr. Doogan?"

"Contract!" cried Jules. "Contract! What do you suppose I care about contracts? I'm going to see my wife—" He made an impatient sign for Larry to hurry, and added, "*—my wife and my son.*"





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